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HENRIK IBSEN

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LONDON WILLIAM HEINEMANN

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HENRIK IBSEN

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VOLUME VIII
AN ENEMY OF THE
PEOPLE
THE WILD DUCK

WITH INTRODUCTIONS BY
WILLIAM ARCHER



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AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE.

INTRODUCTION.

FROM *Pillars of Society* to *John Gabriel Borkman*, all Ibsen's plays, with one exception, succeeded each other at intervals of two years. The single exception was *An Enemy of the People*. The storm of obloquy which greeted *Ghosts* stirred him to unwonted rapidity of production. *Ghosts* had appeared in December 1881, already, on the spring of 1882, Ibsen, then living in Rome, was at work upon its successor, and he finished it at Gossensass, in the Tyrol, in the early autumn. It appeared in Copenhagen at the end of November.

John Paulsen¹ relates an anecdote of the poet's extreme secretiveness during the process of composition, which may find a place here. "One summer he was travelling by rail with his wife and son. He was engaged upon a new play at the time, but neither Fru Ibsen nor Sigurd had any idea as to what it was about. Of course they were both very curious. It happened that, at a station, Ibsen left the carriage for a few moments. As he did so he dropped a scrap of paper. His wife picked it up, and read on it only the words,

¹ *Samliv med Ibsen*, p 173

'The doctor says . . . ' Nothing more Fru Ibsen showed it laughingly to Sigurd, and said, 'Now we will tease your father a little when he comes back. He will be horrified to find that we know anything of his play' When Ibsen entered the carriage his wife looked at him roguishly, and said, 'What doctor is it that figures in your new piece? I am sure he must have many interesting things to say' But if she could have foreseen the effect of her innocent jest, Fru Ibsen would certainly have held her tongue For Ibsen was speechless with surprise and rage When at last he recovered his speech, it was to utter a torrent of reproaches What did this mean? Was he not safe in his own house? Was he surrounded with spies? Had his locks been tampered with, his desk rifled? And so forth, and so forth. His wife, who had listened with a quiet smile to the rising tempest of his wrath, at last handed him the scrap of paper 'We know nothing more than what is written upon this slip which you let fall Allow me to return it to you' There stood Ibsen crestfallen. All his suspicions had vanished into thin air The play on which he was occupied proved to be *An Enemy of the People*, and the doctor was none other than our old friend Stockmann, the good-hearted and muddleheaded reformer, for whom Jonas Lie partly served as a model "

The indignation which glows in *An Enemy of the People* was kindled, in the main, by the attitude adopted towards *Ghosts* by the Norwegian Liberal press and the "compact majority" it represented But the image on which the play rings the changes was present to the poet's long before *Ghosts* was written. On December 19, 1879—a fortnight after the publication of *A Doll's House*—Ibsen wrote to Professor Dietrichson: "It appears to me doubtful whether better artistic

conditions can be attained in Norway before the intellectual soil has been thoroughly turned up and cleansed, and all the swamps drained off" Here we have clearly the germ of *An Enemy of the People* The image so took hold of Ibsen that after applying it to social life in this play, he recurred to it in *The Wild Duck*, in relation to the individual life.

The mood to which we definitely owe *An Enemy of the People* appears very clearly in a letter to George Brandes, dated January 3, 1882, in which Ibsen thanks him for his criticism of *Ghosts*. "What are we to say," he proceeds, "of the attitude taken up by the so-called Liberal press—by those leaders who speak and write about freedom of action and thought, and at the same time make themselves the slaves of the supposed opinions of their subscribers? I am more and more confirmed in my belief that there is something demoralising in engaging in politics and joining parties I, at any rate, shall never be able to join a party which has the majority on its side Bjornson says, 'The majority is always right', and as a practical politician he is bound, I suppose, to say so I, on the contrary, of necessity say, 'The minority is always right' Naturally I am not thinking of that minority of stagnationists who are left behind by the great middle party, which with us is called Liberal, I mean that minority which leads the van, and pushes on to points which the majority has not yet reached I hold that that man is in the right who is most closely in league with the future"

The same letter closes with a passage which foreshadows not only *An Enemy of the People*, but *Rosmersholm*: "When I think how slow and heavy and dull the general intelligence is at home, when I notice the low standard by which everything is judged, a deep

despondency comes over me, and it often seems to me that I might just as well end my literary activity at once. They really do not need poetry at home, they get along so well with the *Parliamentary News* and the *Lutheran Weekly*. And then they have their party papers. I have not the gifts that go to make a good citizen, nor yet the gift of orthodoxy, and what I possess no gift for I keep out of. Liberty is the first and highest condition for me. At home they do not trouble much about liberty, but only about liberties—a few more or a few less, according to the standpoint of their party. I feel, too, most painfully affected by the crudity, the plebeian element, in all our public discussion. The very praiseworthy attempt to make of our people a democratic community has inadvertently gone a good way towards making us a plebeian community. Distinction of soul seems to be on the decline at home."

So early as March 16, 1882, Ibsen announces to his publisher that he is "fully occupied with preparations for a new play." "This time," he says, "it will be a peaceable production which can be read by Ministers of State and wholesale merchants and their ladies, and from which the theatres will not be obliged to recoil. Its execution will come very easy to me, and I shall do my best to have it ready pretty early in the autumn." In this he was successful. From Gossensass, on September 9, he wrote to Hegel: "I have the pleasure of sending you herewith the remainder of the manuscript of my new play. I have enjoyed writing this piece, and I feel quite lost and lonely now that it is out of hand. Dr. Stockmann and I got on excellently together; we agree on so many subjects. But the Doctor is a more muddleheaded person than I am, and he has, moreover, several other characteristics

because of which people will stand hearing a good many things from him which they might perhaps not have taken in such very good part had they been said by me "

A letter to Brandes, written six months after the appearance of the play (June 12, 1883), answers some objection which the critic seems to have made—of what nature we can only guess "As to *An Enemy of the People*, if we had a chance to discuss it I think we should come to a tolerable agreement You are, of course right in urging that we *must* all work for the spread of our opinions But I maintain that a fighter at the intellectual outposts can never gather a majority around him In ten years, perhaps, the majority may occupy the standpoint which Dr Stockmann held at the public meeting But during these ten years the Doctor will not have been standing still ; he will still be at least ten years ahead of the majority The majority, the mass, the multitude, can never overtake him, he can never have the majority with him As for myself, at all events, I am conscious of this incessant progression At the point where I stood when I wrote each of my books, there now stands a fairly compact multitude, but I myself am there no longer, I am elsewhere, and, I hope, further ahead " This is a fine saying, and as just as it is fine, with respect to the series of social plays, down to, and including, *Rosmersholm* To the psychological series, which begins with *The Lady from the Sea*, this law of progression scarcely applies The standpoint in each is different, but the movement is not so much one of intellectual advance as of deepening spiritual insight

As Ibsen predicted, the Scandinavian theatres seized with avidity upon *An Enemy of the People* Between

January and March 1883 it was produced in Christiania, Bergen, Stockholm, and Copenhagen. It has always been very popular on the stage, and was the play chosen to represent Ibsen in the series of festival performances which inaugurated the National Theatre at Christiania. The first evening, September 1, 1899, was devoted to Holberg, the great founder of Norwegian-Danish drama, *An Enemy of the People* followed on September 2, and on September 3 Bjornson held the stage, with *Sigurd Jorsalfar*. Oddly enough, *Een Volksfeind* was four old years before it found its way to the German stage. It was first produced in Berlin, March 5, 1887, and has since then been very popular throughout Germany. It has even been presented at the Court Theatres of Berlin and Vienna—a fact which seems remarkable when we note that in France and Spain it has been pressed into the service of anarchism, as a revolutionary manifesto. When first produced in Paris in 1895, and again in 1899, it was made the occasion of anarchist demonstrations. It was the play chosen for representation in Paris on Ibsen's seventieth birthday, March 29, 1898. In England it was first produced by Mr. Beerbohm Tree at the Haymarket Theatre on the afternoon of June 14, 1893. Mr. Tree has repeated his performance of Stockmann a good many times in London, the provinces, and America. He revived the play at His Majesty's Theatre in 1905. Mr. Louis Calvert played Stockmann at the Gentleman's Concert Hall in Manchester, January 27, 1894. I can find no record of any performances of the play in America, save German performances and those given by Mr. Tree, but it seems incredible that no American actor should have been attracted by the part of Stockmann. *Een Vijand des Volks* was produced in Holland in

1884, before it had even been seen in Germany, and in Italy, *Un Nemico del Popolo* holds a place in the repertory of the distinguished actor Ermete Novelli.

Of all Ibsen's plays, *An Enemy of the People* is the least poetical, the least imaginative, the one which makes least appeal to our sensibilities. Even in *The League of Youth* there is a touch of poetic fancy in the character of Selma; while *Pillars of Society* is sentimentally conceived throughout, and possesses in Martha a figure of great, though somewhat conventional, pathos. In this play, on the other hand, there is no appeal either to the imagination or to the tender emotions. It is a straightforward satiric comedy, dealing exclusively with the everyday prose of life. We have only to compare it with its immediate predecessor, *Ghosts*, and its immediate successor, *The Wild Duck*, to feel how absolutely different is the imaginative effort involved in it. Realising this, we no longer wonder that the poet should have thrown it off in half the time he usually required to mature and execute one of his creations.

Yet *An Enemy of the People* takes a high place in the second rank of the Ibsen works, in virtue of its buoyant vitality, its great technical excellence, and the geniality of its humour. It seems odd, at first sight, that a distinctly polemical play, which took its rise in a mood of exasperation, should be perhaps the most amiable of all the poet's productions. But the reason is fairly obvious. Ibsen's nature was far too complex, and far too specifically dramatic, to permit of his giving anything like direct expression to a personal mood. The very fact that Dr Stockmann was to utter much of his own indignation and many of his own ideas forced him to make the worthy Doctor in temperament and manner as unlike himself

as possible. Now boisterous geniality, loquacity, irrepressible rashness of utterance, and a total absence of self-criticism and self-irony were the very contradiction of the poet's own characteristics—at any rate, after he had entered upon middle life. He doubtless looked round for models who should be his own antipodes in these respects. John Paulsen, as we have seen, thinks that he took many traits from Jonas Lie, others say¹ that one of his chief models was an old friend named Harald Thaulow, the father of the great painter. Be this as it may, the very effort to disguise himself naturally led him to attribute to his protagonist and mouthpiece a great superficial amiability. I am far from implying that Ibsen's own character was essentially unamiable, it would ill become one whom he always treated with the utmost kindness to say or think anything of the kind. But his amiability was not superficial, effusive, exuberant; it seldom reached that boiling-point which we call geniality, and for that very reason Thomas Stockmann became the most genial of his characters. He may be called Ibsen's Colonel Newcome. We have seen from the letter to Hegel (p. x.) that the poet regarded him with much the same ironic affection which Thackeray must have felt for that other Thomas who, amid many differences, had the same simple-minded, large-hearted, child-like nature.

In technical quality, *An Enemy of the People* is wholly admirable. We have only to compare it with *Fallars of Society*, the last play in which Ibsen had painted a broad satiric picture of the life of a Norwegian town, to feel how great an advance he had made in the intervening five years. In naturalness

¹ See article by Julius Elias in *Die neue Rundschau*, December 1906, p. 1461.

of exposition, suppleness of development, and what may be called general untheatricality of treatment, the later play has every possible advantage over the earlier. In one point only can it be said that Ibsen has allowed a touch of artificiality to creep in. In order to render the peripety of the third act more striking, he has made Hovstad, Billing, and Aslaksen, in the earlier scenes, unnaturally inapprehensive of the sacrifices implied in Stockmann's scheme of reform. It is scarcely credible that they should be so free and emphatic in their offers of support to the Doctor's agitation, before they have made the smallest inquiry as to what it is likely to cost the town. They think, it may be said, that the shareholders of the Baths will have to bear the whole expense, but surely some misgivings could not but cross their minds as to whether the shareholders would be prepared to do so.

THE WILD DUCK.

INTRODUCTION

THE first mention of *The Wild Duck* (as yet unnamed) occurs in a letter from Ibsen to George Brandes, dated Rome, June 12, 1883, some six months after the appearance of *An Enemy of the People*. "I am revolving in my mind just now," he says, "the plan of a new dramatic work in four acts. From time to time a variety of whimsies gathers in one's mind, and one wants to find an outlet for them. But as the play will neither deal with the Supreme Court nor with the Absolute Veto, nor even with the Pure Flag, it can hardly count upon attracting much attention in Norway. Let us hope, however, that it may find a hearing elsewhere." The allusion in this passage is to the great constitutional struggle of 1880-84, of which some account will have to be given in the Introduction to *Rosmersholm*. The "Pure Flag" agitation aimed at, and obtained, the exclusion from the Norwegian flag of the mark of union with Sweden, and was thus a preliminary step towards the severance of the two kingdoms. The word which I have translated "whimsies" is in the original *galsskaber*, which might be literally rendered "mad fancies" or "crazy

notions " This word, or *galskab* in the singular, was Ibsen's favourite term for his conceptions as they grew up in his mind I well remember his saying to me, while he was engaged on *The Lady from the Sea*, "I hope to have some tomfoolery [*galskab*] ready for next year " Sometimes he would vary the expression and say *djævelskab*, or "devilry "

Of this particular "tomfoolery " we hear no more for a full year Then, at the end of June 1884, he writes in almost identical terms to Brandes and to Theodor Caspari, announcing its completion in the rough His letter to Caspari is dated Rome, June 27 "All last winter," he says, "I have been pondering over some new whimsies, and have wrestled with them till at last they took dramatic form in a five-act play which I have just completed That is to say, I have completed the rough draft of it Now comes the more delicate elaboration, the more energetic individualisation of the characters and their methods of expression. In order to find the requisite quiet and solitude for this work, I am going in a few days to Gossensass, in the Tyrol " This little glimpse into his workshop is particularly interesting

From Gossensass he wrote to Hegel on September 2 "Herewith I send you the manuscript of my new play, *The Wild Duck*, which has occupied me daily for the past four months, and from which I cannot part without a sense of regret The characters in this play, despite their many frailties, have, in the course of our long daily association, endeared themselves to me However, I hope they will also find good and kind friends among the great reading public, and not least among the player-folk, to whom they all, without exception, offer problems worth the solving. But the study and presentation of these personages will not be

easy . . This new play in some ways occupies a place apart among my dramatic productions, its method of development [literally, of advance] is in many respects divergent from that of its predecessors. But for the present I shall say no more on this subject. The critics will no doubt discover the points in question, at all events, they will find a good deal to wrangle about, a good deal to interpret. Moreover, I think *The Wild Duck* may perhaps lure some of our younger dramatists into new paths, and this I hold to be desirable."

The play was published on November 11, 1884, and was acted at all the leading theatres of Scandinavia in January or February 1885. Ibsen's estimate of its acting value was fully justified. It everywhere proved itself immensely effective on the stage, and Hjalmar, Gina, and Hedvig have made, or greatly enhanced, the reputation of many an actor and actress. Hjalmar was one of the chief successes of Emil Poulsen, the leading Danish actor of his day, who placed the second act of *The Wild Duck* in the programme of his farewell performance. It took more than three years for the play to reach the German stage. It was first acted in Berlin in March 1888, but thereafter it rapidly spread throughout Germany and Austria, and everywhere took firm hold. It was on several occasions, and in various cities, selected for performance in Ibsen's presence, as representing the best that the local theatre could do. In Paris it was produced at the Théâtre Libre in 1891, and was pronounced by Francisque Sarcey to be "obscure, incoherent, insupportable," but nevertheless to leave "a profound impression." In London it was first produced by the Independent Theatre Society on May 4, 1894, Mr W. L. Abingdon playing Hjalmar, and Miss Winifred Fraser giving a

delightful performance of Hedvig The late Clement Scott's pronouncement on it was that "to make a fuss about so feeble a production was to insult dramatic literature and to outrage common sense" It was repeated at the Globe Theatre in May 1897, with Mr. Laurence Irving as Hjalmar and Miss Fraser again as Hedvig In October 1905 it was revived at the Court Theatre, with Mr Granville Barker as Hjalmar and Miss Dorothy Minto as Hedvig Of American performances I find no record It has been acted in Italy and in Greece, I know not with what success The fact that it has no part for a "leading lady" has rendered it less of an international stock piece than *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler*, or even *Rosmersholm*

There can be no doubt that *The Wild Duck* marks a reaction in the poet's mood, following upon the eager vivacity wherewith, in *An Enemy of the People*, he had flung his defiance at the "compact Liberal majority," which, as the reception of *Ghosts* had proved, could not endure to be told the truth Having said his say and liberated his soul, he now began to ask himself whether human nature was, after all, capable of assimilating the strong meat of truth—whether illusion might not be, for the average man, the only thing that could make life livable It would be too much to say that the play gives a generally affirmative answer to this question On the contrary, its last lines express pretty clearly the poet's firm conviction that if life cannot reconcile itself with truth, then life may as well go to the wall Nevertheless his very devotion to truth forces him to realise and admit that it is an antitoxin which, rashly injected at wrong times or in wrong doses, may produce disastrous results It ought not to be indiscriminately administered by "quacksalvers."

Gregers Werle is unquestionably a piece of ironic self-portraiture. In his habit of "pestering people, in their poverty, with the claim of the ideal," the poet adumbrates his own conduct from *Brand* onwards, but especially in *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People*. Relling, again, is an embodiment of the mood which was dominant during the conception of the play—the mood of pitying contempt for that poor thing human nature, as embodied in Hjalmar. An actor who, in playing the part of Relling, made up as Ibsen himself, has been blamed for having committed a fault not only of taste, but of interpretation, since Gregers (it is maintained) is the true Ibsen. But the fact is that both characters represent the poet. They embody the struggle in his mind between idealism and cynical despondency. There can be no doubt, however, that in some measure he consciously identified himself with Gregers. In a letter to Mr Gosse, written in 1872, he had employed in his own person the very phrase, *den ideale fordring*—"the claim of the ideal"—which is Gregers' watchword. The use of this sufficiently obvious phrase, however, does not mean much. Far stronger evidence of identification is afforded by John Paulsen¹ in some anecdotes he relates of Ibsen's habits of "self-help"—evidence which we may all the more safely accept, as Herr Paulsen seems to have been unconscious of its bearing upon the character of Gregers. "Ibsen," he says, "was always bent upon doing things himself, so as not to give trouble to servants. His ideal was 'the self-made man.'² Thus, if a button came off one of his garments he would retire to his own room, lock the door, and, after many comical and

¹ *Samkv med Ibsen*, p. 33.

² Herr Paulsen uses the English words, but it will appear from the sequel that Ibsen's ideal was not so much the self-made as the self-mended man.

unnecessary preliminaries, proceed to sew on the button himself, with the same care with which he wrote the fair copy of a new play. Such an important task he could not possibly entrust to any one else, not even to his wife. One of his paradoxes was that 'a woman never knew how to sew on a button so that it would hold.' But if he himself sewed it on, it held to all eternity. Fru Ibsen smiled roguishly and subtly when the creator of *Nora* came out with such anti-feminist sentiments. Afterwards she told me in confidence, 'It is true that Ibsen himself sews on his vagrant buttons, but the fact that they hold so well is *my* doing, for, without his knowledge, I always 'finish them off,' which he forgets to do. But don't disturb his conviction—it makes him so happy.'

"One winter day in Munich," Herr Paulsen continues, "Ibsen asked me with a serious and even anxious countenance, 'Tell me one thing, Paulsen—do you black your own boots every morning?' I was taken aback, and doubtless looked quite guilty as I answered, 'No.' I had a vaguely uncomfortable sense that I had failed in a duty to myself and to society.

But you really ought to do so. It will make you feel a different man. One should never let others do what one can do oneself. If you begin with blacking your boots, you will get on to putting your room in order, laying the fire, etc. In this way you will at last find yourself an emancipated man, independent of Tom, Dick, or Harry.' I promised to follow his advice, but have unfortunately not kept my word." It is evident that Ibsen purposely transferred to Gregers this characteristic of his own, and the sentiments with which Gina regards it are probably not unlike those which Fru Ibsen may from time to time have manifested. We could scarcely demand clearer

proof that in Gregers the poet was laughing at himself

To Hedvig, Ibsen gave the name of his only sister and in many respects she seems to have served as a model for the character. She was the poet's favourite among all his relatives. "You are certainly the best of us," he wrote to her in 1869. Bjornstjerne Bjornson said, after making her acquaintance, that he now understood what a large element of heredity there was in Ibsen's bent towards mysticism. We may be sure that Hedvig's researches among the books left by the old sea-captain, and her dislike for the frontispiece of Harrison's *History of London*, are remembered traits from the home-life of the poet's childhood. It does not seem to be known who had the honour of "sitting for" the character of Hjalmar. Probably he is a composite of many originals. Moreover, he is obviously a younger brother of Peer Gynt. Deprive Peer Gynt of his sense of humour, and clip the wings of his imagination, and you have Hjalmar Ekdal.

I confess I do not know quite definitely what Ibsen had in mind when he spoke of *The Wild Duck* holding "a place apart" among his productions and exemplifying a technique (for he is evidently thinking of its technical development) "divergent" from that of its predecessors. I should rather say that it marked the continuation and consummation of the technical method which he had been elaborating from *Pillars of Society* onward. It is the first example of what we may term his retrospective method, in its full complexity. *Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House* may be called semi-retrospective; something like half of the essential action takes place before the eyes of the audience. *Ghosts* is almost wholly retrospective, as soon as the past has

been fully unravelled, the action is over, and only the catastrophe remains, but in this case the past to be unravelled is comparatively simple and easy of disentanglement. *An Enemy of the People* is scarcely retrospective at all, almost the whole of its action falls within the frame of the picture. In *The Wild Duck*, on the other hand, the unravelling of the past is a task of infinite subtlety and elaborate art. The execution of this task shows a marvellous and hitherto unexampled grasp of mind. Never before, certainly had the poet displayed such an amazing power of fascinating and absorbing us by the gradual withdrawal of veil after veil from the past, and as every event was also a trait of character, it followed that never before had his dialogue been so saturated, as it were, with character-revelation. The development of the drama reminds one of the practice (in itself a very bad practice) of certain modern stage-managers, who are fond of raising their curtain on a dark scene, and then gradually lighting it up by a series of touches on the electric switchboard. First there comes a glimmer from the right, then a flash from the left, then the background is suffused with light, so that we see objects standing out against it in profile, but cannot as yet discern their details. Then comes a ray from this batten, a gleam from that; here a penetrating shaft of light, there a lambent glow, until at last the footlights are turned on at full, and every nook and cranny of the scene stands revealed in a blaze of luminosity. But Ibsen's switchboard is far more subtly subdivided than that of even the most modern theatre. At every touch upon it, some single, cunningly placed, ingeniously-dissembled burner kindles, almost unnoticed save by the most watchful eye, so that the full light spreads

over the scene as imperceptibly as dawn grows into day.

It seems to me, then, that *The Wild Duck* is a consummation rather than a new departure. Assuredly it marks the summit of the poet's achievement (in modern prose) up to that date. Its only possible rival is *Ghosts*; and who does not feel the greater richness, depth, suppleness, and variety of the later play? It gives us in a word, a larger segment of life.

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE
(1882)

CHARACTERS.

DOCTOR THOMAS STOCKMANN, *medical officer of the Baths*

MRS STOCKMANN, *his wife.*

PETRA, *their daughter, a teacher*

ELIF } *their sons, thirteen and ten years old respec-*
MORTEN } *tively*

PETER STOCKMANN, *the doctor's elder brother, Burgo-*
master¹ and chief of police, chairman of the Baths
Committee, etc

MORTEN KILL,² *master tanner, Mrs Stockmann's adop-*
tive-father

HOVSTAD, *editor of the "People's Messenger"*

BILLING, *on the staff of the paper.*

HORSTER, *a ship's captain*

ASLAKSEN, *a printer*

Participants in a meeting of citizens all sorts and con-
ditions of men, some women, and a band of schoolboys.

The action passes in a town on the South Coast of Norway.

¹ "Burgomaster" is the most convenient substitute for "Byfogd," but "Town Clerk" would perhaps be more nearly equivalent. It is impossible to find exact counterparts in English for the different grades of the Norwegian bureaucracy.

² Pronounce *Keel*.

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE.

PLAY IN FIVE ACTS.

ACT FIRST.

Evening DR STOCKMANN'S sitting-room, simply but neatly decorated and furnished. In the wall to the right are two doors, the further one leading to the hall, the nearer one to the Doctor's study. In the opposite wall, facing the hall door, a door leading to the other rooms of the house. Against the middle of this wall stands the stove, further forward a sofa with a mirror above it, and in front of it an oval table with a cover. On the table a lighted lamp, with a shade. In the back wall an open door leading to the dining-room, in which is seen a supper-table, with a lamp on it.

BILLING is seated at the supper-table, with a napkin under his chin. MRS STOCKMANN is standing by the table and placing before him a dish with a large joint of roast beef. The other seats round the table are empty; the table is in disorder, as after a meal.

MRS. STOCKMANN

If you come an hour late, Mr. Billing, you must put up with a cold supper.

BILLING.

[*Eating*] It is excellent—really first rate.

MRS STOCKMANN

You know how Stockmann insists on regular meal-hours——

BILLING

Oh, I don't mind at all I almost think I enjoy my supper more when I can sit down to it like this, alone and undisturbed

MRS STOCKMANN

Oh, well, if you enjoy it—— [*Listening in the direction of the hall*] I believe this is Mr. Hovstad coming too

BILLING.

Very likely

BURGOMASTER STOCKMANN *enters, wearing an overcoat and an official gold-laced cap, and carrying a stick*

BURGOMASTER

Good evening, sister-in-law

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Coming forward into the sitting-room*] Oh, good evening, is it you? It is good of you to look in.

BURGOMASTER

I was just passing, and so—— [*Looks towards the drawing-room*] Ah, I see you have company.

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Rather embarrassed.*] Oh no, not at all, it's the merest chance [*Hurriedly*] Won't you sit down and have a little supper?

BURGOMASTER.

I? No, thank you Good gracious! hot meat in the evening! That wouldn't suit my digestion.

MRS STOCKMANN

Oh, for once in a way——

BURGOMASTER

No, no,—much obliged to you I stick to tea and bread and butter It's more wholesome in the long run—and rather more economical, too

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Smiling*] You mustn't think Thomas and I are mere spendthrifts, either

BURGOMASTER

You are not, sister-in-law, far be it from me to say that [*Pointing to the Doctor's study*] Is he not at home?

MRS STOCKMANN

No, he has gone for a little turn after supper—with the boys

BURGOMASTER

I wonder if that is a good thing to do? [*Listening*] There he is, no doubt

MRS STOCKMANN

No, that is not he. [*A knock*] Come in!

Hovstad enters from the hall

MRS STOCKMANN

Ah, it's Mr. Hovstad——

Hovstad

You must excuse me, I was detained at the printer's Good evening, Burgomaster

BURGOMASTER.

[*Bowing rather stiffly*] Mr Hovstad? You come on business, I presume?

Hovstad

Partly. About an article for the paper

BURGOMASTER

So I supposed I hear my brother is an extremely prolific contributor to the *People's Messenger*

Hovstad

Yes, when he wants to unburden his mind on one thing or another, he gives the *Messenger* the benefit

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*To Hovstad*] But will you not——? [*Points to the dining-room*]

BURGOMASTER

Well, well, I am far from blaming him for writing for the class of readers he finds most in sympathy with him And, personally, I have no reason to bear your paper any ill-will, Mr Hovstad.

Hovstad.

No, I should think not

BURGOMASTER.

One may say, on the whole, that a fine spirit of mutual tolerance prevails in our town—an excellent

public spirit And that is because we have a great common interest to hold us together—an interest in which all right-minded citizens are equally concerned——

Hovstad.

Yes—the Baths.

BURGOMASTER.

Just so We have our magnificent new Baths Mark my words ! The whole life of the town will centre around the Baths, Mr. Hovstad. There can be no doubt of it !

MRS STOCKMANN.

That is just what Thomas says.

BURGOMASTER

How marvellously the place has developed, even in this couple of years ! Money has come into circulation, and brought life and movement with it Houses and ground-rents rise in value every day

Hovstad

And there are fewer people out of work.

BURGOMASTER

That is true. There is a gratifying diminution in the burden imposed on the well-to-do classes by the poor-rates, and they will be still further lightened if only we have a really good summer this year—a rush of visitors—plenty of invalids, to give the Baths a reputation

Hovstad.

I hear there is every prospect of that.

BURGOMASTER

Things look most promising. Inquiries about apartments and so forth keep on pouring in.

HOVSTAD

Then the Doctor's paper will come in very opportunely.

BURGOMASTER

Has he been writing again?

HOVSTAD

This is a thing he wrote in the winter, enlarging on the virtues of the Baths, and on the excellent sanitary conditions of the town. But at that time I held it over.

BURGOMASTER

Ah—I suppose there was something not quite judicious about it?

HOVSTAD

Not at all. But I thought it better to keep it till the spring, when people are beginning to look about them, and think of their summer quarters——

BURGOMASTER.

You were right, quite right, Mr. Hovstad.

MRS. STOCKMANN.

Yes, Thomas is really indefatigable where the Baths are concerned.

BURGOMASTER.

It is his duty as one of the staff.

HOVSTAD.

And of course he was really their creator.

BURGOMASTER

Was he? Indeed! I gather that certain persons are of that opinion. But I should have thought that I, too, had a modest share in that undertaking.

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, that is what Thomas is always saying.

HOVSTAD

No one dreams of denying it, Burgomaster. You set the thing going, and put it on a practical basis, everybody knows that. I only meant that the original idea was the doctor's.

BURGOMASTER

Yes, my brother has certainly had ideas enough in his time—worse luck! But when it comes to realising them, Mr Hovstad, we want men of another stamp. I should have thought that in this house at any rate——

MRS STOCKMANN

Why, my dear brother-in-law——

HOVSTAD

Burgomaster, how can you——?

MRS STOCKMANN

Do go in and have some supper, Mr Hovstad; my husband is sure to be home directly.

HOVSTAD

Thanks, just a mouthful, perhaps
[*He goes into the dining-room*]

BURGOMASTER

[*Speaking in a low voice*] It is extraordinary how

people who spring direct from the peasant class never can get over their want of tact

MRS STOCKMANN

But why should you care? Surely you and Thomas can share the honour, like brothers.

BURGOMASTER

Yes, one would suppose so, but it seems a share of the honour is not enough for some persons.

MRS STOCKMANN

What nonsense! You and Thomas always get on so well together [Listening] There, I think I hear him. [Goes and opens the door to the hall]

DR STOCKMANN

[Laughing and talking loudly, without] Here's another visitor for you, Katrina. Isn't it capital, eh? Come in, Captain Horster. Hang your coat on that peg. What! you don't wear an overcoat? Fancy, Katrina, I caught him in the street, and I could hardly get him to come in.

CAPTAIN HORSTER

Enters and bows to MRS STOCKMANN.

DR STOCKMANN

[In the doorway] In with you, boys. They're famishing again! Come along, Captain Horster; you must try our roast beef——

[He forces HORSTER into the dining-room.
EILIF and MORTEN follow them.]

MRS STOCKMANN.

But, Thomas, don't you see——

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Turning round in the doorway*] Oh, is that you, Peter! [*Goes up to him and holds out his hand*] Now this is really capital

BURGOMASTER.

Unfortunately, I have only a moment to spare——

DR. STOCKMANN

Nonsense! We shall have some toddy in a minute You're not forgetting the toddy, Katrina?

MRS STOCKMANN

Of course not, the water's boiling
[*She goes into the dining-room.*]

BURGOMASTER.

Toddy too——!

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, sit down, and let's make ourselves comfortable

BURGOMASTER

Thanks; I never join in drinking parties.

DR STOCKMANN.

But this isn't a party

BURGOMASTER

I don't know what else—— [*Looks towards the dining-room*] It's extraordinary how they can get through all that food

DR STOCKMANN

[*Rubbing his hands*] Yes, doesn't it do one good to see young people eat? Always hungry! That's

as it should be They need good, solid meat to put stamina into them ! It is they that have got to whip up the ferment of the future, Peter

BURGOMASTER

May I ask what there is to be "whipped up," as you call it ?

DR STOCKMANN.

You'll have to ask the young people that—when the time comes We shan't see it, of course Two old fogies like you and me——

BURGOMASTER

Come, come ! Surely that is a very extraordinary expression to use——

DR STOCKMANN.

Oh, you mustn't mind my nonsense, Peter I'm in such glorious spirits, you see I feel so unspeakably happy in the midst of all this glowing, germinating life Isn't it a marvellous time we live in ! It seems as though a whole new world were springing up around us

BURGOMASTER.

Do you really think so ?

DR. STOCKMANN.

Of course, you can't see it as clearly as I do. You have passed your life in the midst of it all, and that deadens the impression But I who had to vegetate all those years in that little hole in the north, hardly ever seeing a soul that could speak a stimulating word to me—all this affects me as if I had suddenly dropped into the heart of some teeming metropolis

BURGOMASTER

Well, metropolis——

DR STOCKMANN

Oh, I know well enough that things are on a small scale here, compared with many other places. But there's life here—there's promise—there's an infinity of things to work and strive for; and that is the main point [*Calling*] Katrina, haven't there been any letters?

MRS STOCKMANN

[*In the dining-room*] No, none at all

DR STOCKMANN

And then a good income, Peter! That's a thing one learns to appreciate when one has lived on starvation wages——

BURGOMASTER

Good heavens——!

DR STOCKMANN.

Oh yes, I can tell you we often had hard times of it up there. And now we can live like princes! To-day, for example, we had roast beef for dinner; and we've had some of it for supper too. Won't you have some? Come along—just look at it, at any rate——

BURGOMASTER.

No, no; certainly not——

DR. STOCKMANN.

Well then, look here—do you see we've bought a table-cover?

BURGOMASTER.

Yes, so I observed.

DR STOCKMANN

And a lamp-shade, too Do you see? Katrina has been saving up for them They make the room look comfortable, don't they? Come over here No, no, no, not there So—yes! Now you see how it concentrates the light—I really think it has quite an artistic effect Eh?

BURGOMASTER

Yes, when one can afford such luxuries——

DR STOCKMANN

Oh, I can afford it now. Katrina says I make almost as much as we spend.

BURGOMASTER.

Ah—almost!

DR. STOCKMANN

Besides, a man of science must live in some style Why, I believe a mere sheriff¹ spends much more a year than I do.

BURGOMASTER

Yes, I should think so! A member of the superior magistracy——

DR STOCKMANN.

Well then, even a common shipowner! A man of that sort will get through many times as much——

BURGOMASTER

That is natural, in your relative positions

Amtmand, the chief magistrate of an *Amt* or county: consequently a high dignitary in the official hierarchy.

DR STOCKMANN

And after all, Peter, I really don't squander any money. But I can't deny myself the delight of having people about me. I must have them. After living so long out of the world, I find it a necessity of life to have bright, cheerful, freedom-loving, hard-working young fellows around me—and that's what they are, all of them, that are sitting there eating so heartily. I wish you knew more of Hovstad—

BURGOMASTER

Ah, that reminds me—Hovstad was telling me that he is going to publish another article of yours.

DR STOCKMANN

An article of mine?

BURGOMASTER

Yes, about the Baths. An article you wrote last winter.

DR STOCKMANN

Oh, that one! But I don't want that to appeal for the present.

BURGOMASTER

Why not? It seems to me this is the very time for it.

DR STOCKMANN

Very likely—under ordinary circumstances—
[Crosses the room.]

BURGOMASTER

[Following him with his eyes] And what is unusual in the circumstances now?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Standing still*] The fact is, Peter, I really cannot tell you just now, not this evening, at all events. There may prove to be a great deal that is unusual in the circumstances. On the other hand, there may be nothing at all. Very likely it's only my fancy.

BURGOMASTER

Upon my word, you are very enigmatical. Is there anything in the wind? Anything I am to be kept in the dark about? I should think, as Chairman of the Bath Committee——

DR. STOCKMANN.

And I should think that I—— Well, well, don't let us get our backs up, Peter.

BURGOMASTER

God forbid! I am not in the habit of "getting my back up," as you express it. But I must absolutely insist that all arrangements shall be made and carried out in a businesslike manner, and through the properly constituted authorities. I cannot be a party to crooked or underhand courses.

DR. STOCKMANN

Have I ever been given to crooked or underhand courses?

BURGOMASTER.

At any rate you have an ingrained propensity to taking your own course. And that, in a well-ordered community, is almost as inadmissible. The individual must subordinate himself to society, or,

more precisely, to the authorities whose business it is to watch over the welfare of society

DR STOCKMANN.

Maybe But what the devil has that to do with me ?

BURGOMASTER

Why this is the very thing, my dear Thomas, that it seems you will never learn But take care, you will have to pay for it—sooner or later Now I have warned you Good-bye

DR STOCKMANN

Are you stark mad ? You're on a totally wrong track——

BURGOMASTER.

I am not often on the wrong track Moreover, I must protest against—— [*Bowing towards dining-room*] Good-bye, sister-in-law ; good-day to you, gentlemen [*He goes.*]

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Entering the sitting-room*] Has he gone ?

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, and in a fine temper, too

MRS STOCKMANN.

Why, my dear Thomas, what have you been doing to him now ?

DR STOCKMANN.

Nothing at all. He can't possibly expect me to account to him for everything—before the time comes

MRS STOCKMANN

What have you to account to him for?

DR STOCKMANN

H'm,—never mind about that, Katrina —It's very odd the postman doesn't come

[HOVSTAD, BILLING and HORSTER have risen from table and come forward into the sitting-room EILIF and MORTEN presently follow]

BILLING

[*Stretching himself*] Ah! Strike me dead if one doesn't feel a new man after such a meal

HOVSTAD

The Burgomaster didn't seem in the best of tempers this evening

DR. STOCKMANN

That's his stomach. He has a very poor digestion

HOVSTAD.

I fancy it's the staff of the *Messenger* he finds it hardest to stomach.

MRS. STOCKMANN.

I thought you got on well enough with him.

HOVSTAD

Oh, yes; but it's only a sort of armistice between us.

BILLING

That's it That word sums up the situation.

DR STOCKMANN

We must remember that Peter is a lonely bachelor, poor devil! He has no home to be happy in, only business, business. And then all that cursed weak tea he goes and pours down his throat! Now then, chairs round the table, boys! Katrina, shan't we have the toddy now?

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Going towards the dining-room.*] I am just getting it

DR STOCKMANN

And you, Captain Horster, sit beside me on the sofa. So rare a guest as you—— Sit down, gentlemen, sit down

The men sit round the table, Mrs STOCKMANN brings in a tray with kettle, glasses, decanters, etc

MRS STOCKMANN

Here you have it here's arrak, and this is rum, and this cognac. Now, help yourselves

DR STOCKMANN

[*Taking a glass*] So we will [*While the toddy is being mixed*] And now out with the cigars. Ehlf, I think you know where the box is. And Morten, you may fetch my pipe [*The boys go into the room on the right*] I have a suspicion that Ehlf sneaks a cigar now and then, but I pretend not to notice [*Calls*] And my smoking-cap, Morten! Katrina, can't you tell him where I left it? Ah, he's got it [*The boys bring in the things*] Now, friends, help yourselves. I stick to my pipe, you know,—this one has been on many a stormy

journey with me, up there in the north. [*They clink glasses*] Your health! Ah, I can tell you it's better fun to sit cosily here, safe from wind and weather.

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*Who sits knitting*] Do you sail soon, Captain Hoister?

HORSTER

I hope to be ready for a start by next week.

MRS STOCKMANN.

And you're going to America?

HORSTER

Yes, that's the intention

BILLING

But then you'll miss the election of the new Town Council

HORSTER

Is there to be an election again?

BILLING.

Didn't you know?

HORSTER

No, I don't trouble myself about those things

BILLING

But I suppose you take an interest in public affairs?

HORSTER

No, I don't understand anything about them

BILLING

All the same, one ought at least to vote

HORSTER

Even those who don't understand anything about it?

BILLING

Understand? Why, what do you mean by that? Society is like a ship every man must put his hand to the helm.

HORSTER

That may be all right on shore, but at sea it wouldn't do at all

HOVSTAD

It's remarkable how little sailors care about public affairs as a rule

BILLING

Most extraordinary

DR STOCKMANN

Sailors are like birds of passage, they are at home both in the south and in the north. So it behoves the rest of us to be all the more energetic, Mr Hovstad. Will there be anything of public interest in the *People's Messenger* to-morrow?

HOVSTAD

Nothing of local interest. But the day after to-morrow I think of printing your article——

DR STOCKMANN.

Oh confound it, that article! No, you'll have to hold it over

HOVSTAD

Really? We happen to have plenty of space, and I should say this was the very time for it——

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, you may be right, but you must hold it over all the same I shall explain to you by- and by

PETRA, *wearing a hat and cloak, and with a number of exercise-books under her arm, enters from the hall,*

PETRA

Good evening

DR STOCKMANN

Good evening, Petra Is that you ?

[*General greetings* PETRA *puts her cloak, hat, and books on a chair by the door*

PETRA

Here you all are, enjoying yourselves, while I've been out slaving

DR STOCKMANN

Well then, you come and enjoy yourself too

BILLING

May I mix you a little—— ?

PETRA

[*Coming towards the table*] Thank you, I'd rather help myself—you always make it too strong By the way, father, I have a letter for you

[*Goes to the chair where her things are lying.*

DR. STOCKMANN

A letter ! From whom ?

PETRA

[*Searching in the pocket of her cloak*] I got it from the postman just as I was going out——

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Rising and going towards her*] And you only bring it me now?

PETRA

I really hadn't time to run up again. Here it is

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Seizing the letter*] Let me see, let me see, child.
[*Reads the address*] Yes, this is it——!

MRS STOCKMANN

Is it the one you have been so anxious about, Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes it is. I must go at once. Where shall I find a light, Katrina? Is there no lamp in my study again?

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes—the lamp is lighted. It's on the writing-table

DR. STOCKMANN

Good, good. Excuse me one moment——
[*He goes into the room on the right.*]

PETRA

What can it be, mother?

MRS STOCKMANN

I don't know. For the last few days he has been continually on the look-out for the postman.

BILLING

Probably a country patient——

PETRA.

Poor father! He'll soon have far too much

to do. [*Mimes her toddy*] Ah, this will taste good'

Hovstad.

Have you been teaching in the night school as well to-day?

PETRA

[*Sipping from her glass*] Two hours

BILLING

And four hours in the morning at the institute——

PETRA

[*Sitting down by the table*] Five hours

MRS STOCKMANN

And I see you have exercises to correct this evening

PETRA

Yes, a heap of them

HORSTER

It seems to me you have plenty to do, too

PETRA

Yes; but I like it You feel so delightfully tired after it

BILLING

Do you like that?

PETRA.

Yes, for then you sleep so well

MORTEN

I say, Petra, you must be a great sinner.

PETRA

A sinner ?

MORTEN

Yes, if you work so hard M^r Rorlund ¹ says
work is a punishment for our sins

EILIF

[*Contemptuously*] Bosh ! What a silly you
are, to believe such stuff as that

MRS STOCKMANN

Come come, Eilif

BILLING

[*Laughing*] Capital, capital !

HOVSTAD

Should you not like to work so hard, Morten ?

MORTEN

No, I shouldn't.

HOVSTAD

Then what will you do with yourself in the
world ?

MORTEN

I should like to be a Viking

EILIF

But then you'd have to be a heathen

MORTEN

Well, so I would

BILLING

There I agree with you, Morten ! I say just
the same thing.

See Pillars of Society

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Making a sign to him*] No, no, Mr Billing, I'm sure*you don't

BILLING

Strike me dead but I do, though I am a heathen, and I'm proud of it You'll see we shall all be heathens soon

MORTEN

And shall we be able to do anything we like then ?

BILLING.

Well, you see, Morten——

MRS STOCKMANN

Now run away, boys , I'm sure you have lessons to prepare for to-morrow

EILIF

You might let me stay just a little longer——

MRS STOCKMANN

No, you must go too Be off, both of you.

[*The boys say good-night and go into the room on the left*]

HOVSTAD

Do you really think it can hurt the boys to hear these things ?

MRS STOCKMANN

Well, I don't know , I don't like it.

PETRA

Really, mother, I think you are quite wrong there.

MRS STOCKMANN

Perhaps. But I don't like it—not here, at home

PETRA

There's no end of hypocrisy both at home and at school. At home you must hold your tongue, and at school you have to stand up and tell lies to the children

HORSTER.

Have you to tell lies ?

PETRA.

Yes, do you think we don't have to tell them many and many a thing we don't believe ourselves ?

BILLING

Ah, that's too true

PETRA

If only I could afford it, I should start a school myself, and things should be very different there

BILLING

Oh, afford it—— !

HORSTER

If you really think of doing that, Miss Stockmann, I shall be delighted to let you have a room at my place. You know my father's old house is nearly empty, there's a great big dining-room on the ground floor——

PETRA.

[*Laughing*] Oh, thank you very much—but I'm afraid it won't come to anything

Hovstad

No, I fancy Miss Petra is more likely to go over to journalism. By the way, have you had time to look into the English novel you promised to translate for us?

Petra

Not yet. But you shall have it in good time.

DR. STOCKMANN *enters from his room, with the letter open in his hand*

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Flourishing the letter*] Here's news, I can tell you, that will waken up the town!

Billing

News?

MRS. STOCKMANN.

What news?

DR. STOCKMANN

A great discovery, Katrina!

Hovstad

Indeed?

MRS. STOCKMANN.

Made by you?

DR. STOCKMANN

Precisely—by me! [*Walks up and down*] Now let them go on accusing me of fads and crack-brained notions. But they won't dare to! Ha-ha! I tell you they won't dare!

Petra.

Do tell us what it is, father.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, well, give me time, and you shall hear all about it. If only I had Peter here now! That just shows how we men can go about forming judgments like the blindest moles——

HOVSTAD

What do you mean, doctor?

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Stopping beside the table*] Isn't it the general opinion that our town is a healthy place?

HOVSTAD

Of course

DR. STOCKMANN

A quite exceptionally healthy place, indeed——a place to be warmly recommended, both to invalids and people in health——

MRS. STOCKMANN.

My dear Thomas——

DR. STOCKMANN

And assuredly we haven't failed to recommend and laud it. I've sung its praises again and again both in the *Messenger* and in pamphlets——

HOVSTAD

Well, what then?

DR. STOCKMANN

These Baths, that we have called the pulse of the town, its vital nerve, and——and the devil knows what else——

BILLING

"Our city's palpitating heart," I once ventured to call them in a convivial moment——

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, I daresay Well—do you know what they really are, these mighty, magnificent, be-lauded Baths, that have cost so much money—do you know what they are ?

HOVSTAD.

No, what are they ?

MRS STOCKMANN.

Do tell us.

DR STOCKMANN.

Simply a pestiferous hole.

PETRA.

The Baths, father ?

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*At the same time.*] Our Baths !

HOVSTAD

[*Also at the same time.*] But, Doctor—— !

BILLING

Oh, it's incredible !

DR STOCKMANN

I tell you the whole place is a poisonous whited-sepulchre; noxious in the highest degree ! All that filth up there in the Mill Dale—the stuff that smells so horribly—taints the water in the

feed-pipes of the Pump-Room, and the same accursed poisonous refuse oozes out by the beach——

Hovstad.

Where the sea-baths are?

Dr. Stockmann.

Exactly.

Hovstad

But how are you so sure of all this, Doctor?

Dr. Stockmann

I've investigated the whole thing as conscientiously as possible. I've long had my suspicions about it. Last year we had some extraordinary cases of illness among the patients—both typhoid and gastric attacks——

Mrs. Stockmann.

Yes, I remember

Dr. Stockmann.

We thought at the time that the visitors had brought the infection with them, but afterwards—last winter—I began to question that. So I set about testing the water as well as I could

Mrs. Stockmann

It was that you were working so hard at!

Dr. Stockmann

Yes, you may well say I've worked, Katrina. But here, you know, I hadn't the necessary scientific appliances, so I sent samples both of our drinking-water and of our sea-water

to the University, for exact analysis by a chemist

Hovstad

And you have received his report ?

DR STOCKMANN

[*Showing letter*] Here it is ' And it proves beyond dispute the presence of putrefying organic matter in the water—millions of infusoria. It's absolutely pernicious to health, whether used internally or externally

MRS. STOCKMANN

What a blessing you found it out in time.

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, you may well say that

Hovstad

And what do you intend to do now, Doctor ?

DR STOCKMANN

Why, to set things right, of course.

Hovstad

You think it can be done, then ?

DR. STOCKMANN

It must be done Else the whole Baths are useless, ruined But there's no fear I am quite clear as to what is required.

MRS STOCKMANN

But, my dear Thomas, why should you have made such a secret of all this ?

DR STOCKMANN

Would you have had me rush all over the town and chatter about it, before I was quite certain? No, thank you, I'm not so mad as that.

PETRA.

But to us at home——

DR STOCKMANN

I couldn't say a word to a living soul. But to-morrow you may look in at the Badger's——

MRS STOCKMANN.

Oh, Thomas!

DR STOCKMANN.

Well well, at your grandfather's! The old fellow will be astonished! He thinks I'm not quite right in my head—yes, and plenty of others think the same, I've noticed. But now these good people shall see—yes, they shall see now! [*Walks up and down rubbing his hands*] What a stir there will be in the town, Katina! Just think of it! All the water-pipes will have to be relaid.

HOVSTAD

[*Rising*] • All the water-pipes——?

DR STOCKMANN

Why, of course. The intake is too low down; it must be moved much higher up.

PETRA.

So you were right, after all.

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, do you remember, Petia? I wrote against it when they were beginning the works. But no one would listen to me then. Now, you may be sure, I shall give them my full broadside—for of course I've prepared a statement for the Directors, it has been lying ready a whole week, I've only been waiting for this report. [*Pomts to letter*] But now they shall have it at once. [*Goes into his room and returns with a MS in his hand*] See! Four closely-written sheets! And I'll enclose the report. A newspaper, Katrina! Get me something to wrap them up in. There—that's it. Give it to—to—[*Stamps*—what the devil's her name? Give it to the girl, I mean, and tell her to take it at once to the Burgomaster!

[*Mrs. STOCKMANN goes out with the packet through the dining-room.*]

PETRA.

What do you think Uncle Peter will say, father?

DR. STOCKMANN

What should he say? He can't possibly be otherwise than pleased that so important a fact has been brought to light.

HOVSTAD.

I suppose you will let me put a short announcement of your discovery in the *Messenger*.

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, I shall be much obliged if you will.

HOVSTAD.

It is highly desirable that the public should know about it as soon as possible.

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, certainly.

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Returning*] She's gone with it.

BILLING

Strike me dead if you won't be the first man in the town, Doctor!

DR STOCKMANN

[*Walks up and down in high glee*] Oh, nonsense! After all, I have done no more than my duty. I've been a lucky treasure-hunter, that's all. But all the same——

BILLING

Hovstad, don't you think the town ought to get up a torchlight procession in honour of Dr. Stockmann?

HOVSTAD.

I shall certainly propose it

BILLING

And I'll talk it over with Aslaksen.

DR. STOCKMANN

No, my dear friends; let all such claptrap alone. I won't hear of anything of the sort. And if the Directors should want to raise my salary, I won't accept it. I tell you, Katrina, I will not accept it.

MRS STOCKMANN.

You are quite right, Thomas.

PETRA.

[*Raising her glass*] Your health, father!

Hovstad and BILLING.

Your health, your health, Doctor !

HORSTER

[*Clinking glasses with the Doctor*] I hope you may have nothing but joy of your discovery.

DR. STOCKMANN

Thanks, thanks, my dear friends ! I can't tell you how happy I am— ! Oh, what a blessing it is to feel that you have deserved well of your native town and your fellow citizens Hurrah, Katrina !

[*He puts both his arms round her neck, and whirls her round with him* MRS STOCKMANN screams and struggles A burst of laughter, applause, and cheers for the Doctor The boys thrust their heads in at the door

ACT SECOND.

The DOCTOR's sitting-room. The dining-room door is closed. Morning

MRS STOCKMANN.

[Enters from the dining-room with a sealed letter in her hand, goes to the foremost door on the right, and peeps in] Are you there, Thomas?

DR STOCKMANN

[Within] Yes, I have just come in. *[Enters]*
What is it?

MRS STOCKMANN

A letter from your brother. *[Hands it to him]*

DR STOCKMANN

Aha, let us see *[Opens the envelope and reads]*
"The MS. sent me is returned herewith——"
[Reads on, mumbling to himself] H'm—

MRS STOCKMANN.

Well, what does he say?

DR STOCKMANN

[Putting the paper in his pocket] Nothing; only that he'll come up himself about midday.

MRS. STOCKMANN

Then be sure you remember to stay at home,

DR STOCKMANN

Oh, I can easily manage that, I've finished my morning's visits.

MRS STOCKMANN.

I am very curious to know how he takes it.

DR STOCKMANN

You'll see he won't be over-pleased that it is I that have made the discovery and not he himself.

MRS STOCKMANN.

Ah, that's just what I'm afraid of.

DR STOCKMANN

Of course at bottom he'll be glad But still—Peter is damnably unwilling that any one but himself should do anything for the good of the town.

MRS STOCKMANN.

Do you know, Thomas, I think you might stretch a point, and share the honour with him Couldn't it appear that it was he that put you on the track——?

DR STOCKMANN.

By all means, for aught I care. If only I can get things put straight——

Old MORTEN KIL puts his head in at the hall door, and asks slyly.

MORTEN KIL.

Is it—is it true?

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Going towards him*] Father—is that you?

DR STOCKMANN

Hallo, father-in-law! Good morning, good morning.

MRS. STOCKMANN.

Do come in.

MORTEN KIL

Yes, if it's true; if not, I'm off again.

DR STOCKMANN.

If what is true?

MORTEN KIL

This crazy business about the water-works
Now, is it true?

DR STOCKMANN.

Why, of course it is. But how came you to hear of it?

MORTEN KIL

[*Coming in*] Petra looked in on her way to the school——

DR. STOCKMANN

Oh, did she?

MORTEN KIL

Ay ay—and she told me— I thought she was only making game of me; but that's not like Petra either

DR STOCKMANN.

No, indeed; how could you think so?

MORTEN KIIL

Oh, you can never be sure of anybody You may be made a fool of before you know where you are So it is true, after all ?

DR STOCKMANN

Most certainly it is Do sit down, father-in-law [*Forces him down on the sofa*] Now isn't it a real blessing for the town——?

MORTEN KIIL

[*Suppressing his laughter*] A blessing for the town ?

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, that I made this discovery in time——

MORTEN KIIL

[*As before*] Ay, ay, ay !—Well, I could never have believed that you would play monkey-tricks with your very own brother

DR STOCKMANN.

Monkey-tricks !

MRS STOCKMANN.

Why, father dear——

MORTEN KIIL.

[*Resting his hands and chin on the top of his stick and blinking slyly at the Doctor*] What was it again ? Wasn't it that some animals had got into the water-pipes ?

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, infusorial animals

MORTEN KIIL

And any number of these animals had got in, Petia said—whole swarms of them

DR STOCKMANN

Certainly, hundreds of thousands.

MORTEN KIIL

But no one can see them—isn't that it?

DR STOCKMANN

Quite right; no one can see them.

MORTEN KIIL

[*With a quiet, chuckling laugh*] I'll be damned if that isn't the best thing I've heard of you yet

DR STOCKMAN

What do you mean?

MORTEN KIIL

But you'll never in this world make the Burgomaster take in anything of the sort

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, that we shall see

MORTEN KIIL

Do you really think he'll be so crazy?

DR STOCKMANN

I hope the whole town will be so crazy

MORTEN KIIL

The whole town! Well, I don't say but it may. But it serves them right, it'll teach them a lesson. They wanted to be so much cleverer than we old fellows. They hounded me out of the Town Council. Yes; I tell you they hounded me out like a dog, that they did. But now it's

their turn. Just you keep up the game with them, Stockmann.

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, but, father-in-law——

MORTEN KIL

Keep it up, I say [*Rising*] If you can make the Burgomaster and his gang eat humble pie, I'll give a hundred crowns straight away to the poor.

DR. STOCKMANN.

Come, that's good of you

MORTEN KIL.

Of course I've little enough to throw away, but if you can manage that, I shall certainly remember the poor at Christmas-time, to the tune of fifty crowns

Hovstad *enters from hall.*

HOVSTAD.

Good morning! [*Pausing.*] Oh! I beg your pardon——

DR. STOCKMANN.

Not at all. Come in, come in.

MORTEN KIL

[*Chuckling again*] He! Is he in it too?

HOVSTAD.

What do you mean?

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, of course he is.

MORTEN KIL

I might have known it! It's to go into the papers Ah, you're the one, Stockmann! Do you two lay your heads together; I'm off

DR STOCKMANN

Oh no; don't go yet, father-in-law.

MORTEN KIL

No, I'm off now Play them all the monkey-tricks you can think of Deuce take me but you shan't lose by it

[*He goes, Mrs. STOCKMANN accompanying him.*]

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Laughing*] What do you think—? The old fellow doesn't believe a word of all this about the water-works.

HOVSTAD.

Was that what he——?

DR STOCKMANN

Yes; that was what we were talking about And I daresay you have come on the same business?

HOVSTAD

Yes. Have you a moment to spare, Doctor?

DR STOCKMANN

As many as you like, my dear fellow.

HOVSTAD

Have you heard anything from the Burgo-master?

DR STOCKMANN

Not yet. He'll be here presently.

HOVSTAD.

I have been thinking the matter over since last evening.

DR. STOCKMANN.

Well ?

HOVSTAD.

To you, as a doctor and a man of science, this business of the water-works appears an isolated affair I daresay it hasn't occurred to you that a good many other things are bound up with it ?

DR STOCKMANN

Indeed ! In what way ? Let us sit down, my dear fellow — No, there, on the sofa

[HOVSTAD *sits on sofa* the DOCTOR *in an easy-chair on the other side of the table.*

DR STOCKMANN.

Well, so you think—— ?

HOVSTAD.

You said yesterday that the water is polluted by impurities in the soil.

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, undoubtedly ; the mischief comes from that poisonous swamp up in the Mill Dale.

HOVSTAD

Excuse me, Doctor, but I think it comes from a very different swamp.

DR STOCKMANN.

What swamp may that be ?

HOVSTAD

The swamp in which our whole municipal life is rotting

DR STOCKMANN

The devil, Mr Hovstad ! What notion is this you've got hold of ?

HOVSTAD

All the affairs of the town have gradually drifted into the hands of a pack of bureaucrats——

DR STOCKMANN

Come now, they're not all bureaucrats

HOVSTAD

No ; but those who are not are the friends and adherents of those who are We are entirely under the thumb of a ring of wealthy men, men of old family and position in the town

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, but they are also men of ability and insight

HOVSTAD

Did they show ability and insight when they laid the water-pipes where they are ?

DR STOCKMANN

No, that, of course, was a piece of stupidity. But that will be set right now.

HOVSTAD

Do you think it will go so smoothly ?

DR STOCKMANN

Well, smoothly or not, it will have to be done.

HOVSTAD

Yes, if the press exerts its influence.

DR. STOCKMANN

Not at all necessary, my dear fellow ; I am sure my brother——

HOVSTAD

Excuse me, Doctor, but I must tell you that I think of taking the matter up

DR STOCKMANN

In the paper ?

HOVSTAD

Yes. When I took over the *People's Messenger*, I was determined to break up the ring of obstinate old blockheads who held everything in their hands.

DR STOCKMANN

But you told me yourself what came of it. You nearly ruined the paper.

HOVSTAD

Yes, at that time we had to draw in our horns, that's true enough. The whole Bath scheme might have fallen through if these men had been sent about their business. But now the Baths are an accomplished fact, and we can get on without these august personages.

DR STOCKMANN

Get on without them, yes, but still we owe them a great deal.

Hovstad.

The debt shall be duly acknowledged. But a journalist of my democratic tendencies cannot let such an opportunity slip through his fingers. We must explode the tradition of official infallibility. That rubbish must be got rid of, like every other superstition.

DR. STOCKMANN.

There I am with you with all my heart, Mr. Hovstad. If it's a superstition, away with it!

Hovstad.

I should be sorry to attack the Burgomaster, as he is your brother. But I know you think with me—the truth before all other considerations.

DR. STOCKMANN.

Why, of course [*Vehemently*] But still—' but still——'

Hovstad.

You mustn't think ill of me. I am neither more self-interested nor more ambitious than other men.

DR. STOCKMANN

Why, my dear fellow—who says you are?

Hovstad

I come of humble folk, as you know, and I have had ample opportunities of seeing what the lower classes really require. And that is to have a share in the direction of public affairs, Doctor. That is what develops ability and knowledge and self-respect——

DR. STOCKMANN.

I understand that perfectly.

HOVSTAD

Yes, and I think a journalist incurs a heavy responsibility if he lets slip a chance of helping to emancipate the downtrodden masses. I know well enough that our oligarchy will denounce me as an agitator, and so forth, but what do I care? If only my conscience is clear, I——

DR STOCKMANN

Just so, just so, my dear Mr Hovstad. But still—deuce take it——' [*A knock at the door*] Come in!

ASLAKSEN, *the printer, appears at the door leading to the hall. He is humbly but respectably dressed in black, wears a white necktie, slightly crumpled, and has a silk hat and gloves in his hand.*

ASLAKSEN

[*Bowing*] I beg pardon, Doctor, for making so bold——

DR STOCKMANN

[*Rising*] Hallo! If it isn't Mr Aslaksen!

ASLAKSEN.

Yes, it's me, Doctor.

HOVSTAD.

[*Rising.*] Is it me you want, Aslaksen?

ASLAKSEN

No, not at all. I didn't know you were here. No, it's the Doctor himself——

DR STOCKMANN.

Well, what can I do for you?

ASLAKSEN

Is it true, what Mr Billing tells me, that you're going to get us a better set of water-works ?

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, for the Baths

ASLAKSEN.

Of course, of course Then I just looked in to say that I'll back up the movement with all my might

HOVSTAD

[*To the Doctor*] You see !

DR STOCKMANN.

I'm sure I thank you heartily, but——

ASLAKSEN

You may find it no such bad thing to have us small middle-class men at your back We form what you may call a compact majority in the town——when we really make up our minds, that's to say And it's always well to have the majority with you, Doctor

DR STOCKMANN.

No doubt, no doubt; but I can't conceive that any special measures will be necessary in this case I should think in so clear and straightforward a matter——

ASLAKSEN

Yes, but all the same, it can do no harm I know the local authorities very well—the powers that be are not over ready to adopt suggestions from outsiders So I think it wouldn't be amiss if we made some sort of a demonstration

Hovstad.

Precisely my opinion.

Dr. Stockmann

A demonstration, you say? But in what way would you demonstrate?

Aslaksen.

Of course with great moderation, Doctor. I always insist upon moderation, for moderation is a citizen's first virtue—at least that's my way of thinking.

Dr. Stockmann

We all know that, Mr Aslaksen.

Aslaksen

Yes, I think my moderation is generally recognised. And this affair of the water-works is very important for us small middle-class men. The Baths bid fair to become, as you might say, a little gold-mine for the town. We shall all have to live by the Baths, especially we house-owners. So we want to support the Baths all we can, and as I am Chairman of the House-owners' Association——

Dr. Stockmann.

Well——?

Aslaksen.

And as I'm an active worker for the Temperance¹ Society—of course you know, Doctor, that I'm a temperance man?

Dr. Stockmann

To be sure, to be sure.

¹ The word "mådehold," in Norwegian, means both "moderation" and "temperance."

ASLAKSEN

Well, you'll understand that I come in contact with a great many people. And as I'm known to be a prudent and law-abiding citizen, as you yourself remarked, Doctor, I have a certain influence in the town, and hold some power in my hands—though I say it that shouldn't

DR STOCKMANN

I know that very well, Mr Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN

Well then, you see—it would be easy for me to get up an address, if it came to a pinch.

DR STOCKMANN

An address?

ASLAKSEN

Yes, a kind of vote of thanks to you, from the citizens of the town, for your action in a matter of such general concern. Of course it will have to be drawn up with all fitting moderation, so as to give no offence to the authorities and parties in power. But so long as we're careful about that, no one can take it ill, I should think.

HOVSTAD

Well, even if they didn't particularly like it——

ASLAKSEN

No no no, no offence to the powers that be, Mr Hovstad. No opposition to people that can take it out of us again so easily. I've had enough of that in my time, no good ever comes of it. But no one can object to the free but temperate expression of a citizen's opinion.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Shaking his hand*] I can't tell you, my dear Mr Aslaksen, how heartily it delights me to find so much support among my fellow townsmen. I'm so happy—so happy! Come, you'll have a glass of sherry? Eh?

ASLAKSEN.

No, thank you; I never touch spirituous liquors

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, then, a glass of beer—what do you say to that?

ASLAKSEN.

Thanks, not that either, Doctor. I never take anything so early in the day. And now I'll be off round the town, and talk to some of the house-owners, and prepare public opinion

DR STOCKMANN

It's extremely kind of you, Mr. Aslaksen, but I really cannot get it into my head that all these preparations are necessary. The affair seems to me so simple and self-evident.

ASLAKSEN

The authorities always move slowly, Doctor—God forbid I should blame them for it——

HOVSTAD.

We'll stir them up in the paper to-morrow, Aslaksen

ASLAKSEN.

No violence, Mr Hovstad. Proceed with moderation, or you'll do nothing with them. Take

my advice; I've picked up experience in the school of life—And now I'll say good morning, Doctor. You know now that at least you have us small middle-class men behind you, solid as a wall. You have the compact majority on your side, Doctor.

DR. STOCKMANN

Many thanks, my dear Mr. Aslaksen [*Holds out his hand*] Good-bye, good-bye.

ASLAKSEN

Are you coming to the office, Mr. Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

I shall come on presently. I have still one or two things to arrange.

ASLAKSEN.

Very well.

[*Bows and goes* DR. STOCKMANN *accompanies him into the hall.*]

HOVSTAD.

[*As the Doctor re-enters*] Well, what do you say to that, Doctor? Don't you think it is high time we should give all this weak-kneed, half-hearted cowardice a good shaking up?

DR. STOCKMANN.

Are you speaking of Aslaksen?

HOVSTAD.

Yes, I am. He's a decent enough fellow, but he's one of those who are sunk in the swamp. And most people here are just like him; they are for ever wavering and wobbling from side to side;

what with scruples and misgivings, they never dare advance a step

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, but Aslaksen seems to me thoroughly well-intentioned

Hovstad

There is one thing I value more than good intentions, and that is an attitude of manly self-reliance

DR STOCKMANN.

There I am quite with you

Hovstad

So I am going to seize this opportunity, and try whether I can't for once put a little gut into their good intentions. The worship of authority must be rooted up in this town. This gross, inexcusable blunder of the waterworks must be brought home clearly to every voter

DR STOCKMANN

Very well. If you think it's for the good of the community, so be it, but not till I have spoken to my brother.

Hovstad

At all events, I shall be writing my leader in the meantime. And if the Burgomaster won't take the matter up——

DR STOCKMANN

But how can you conceive his refusing?

Hovstad

Oh, it's not inconceivable. And then——

DR STOCKMANN.

Well then, I promise you—; look here—in that case you may print my paper—put it in just as it is.

HOVSTAD.

May I? Is that a promise?

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Handing him the manuscript.*] There it is; take it with you. You may as well read it in any case; you can return it to me afterwards.

HOVSTAD

Very good; I shall do so. And now, good-bye, Doctor.

DR STOCKMANN.

Good-bye, good-bye. You'll see it will all go smoothly, Mr Hovstad—as smoothly as possible.

HOVSTAD.

H'm—we shall see

[*Bows and goes out through the hall!*]

DR STOCKMANN

[*Going to the dining-room door and looking in.*] Katina! Hallo! are you back, Petra?

PETRA.

[*Entering.*] Yes, I've just got back from school.

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*Entering.*] Hasn't he been here yet?

DR. STOCKMANN

Peter? No; but I have been having a long

talk with Hovstad. He's quite enthusiastic about my discovery. It turns out to be of much wider import than I thought at first. So he has placed his paper at my disposal, if I should require it.

MRS STOCKMANN

Do you think you will?

DR STOCKMANN

Not I! But at the same time, one cannot but be proud to know that the enlightened, independent press is on one's side. And what do you think? I have had a visit from the Chairman of the House-owners' Association too.

MRS STOCKMANN.

Really? What did he want?

DR STOCKMANN

To assure me of his support. They will all stand by me at a pinch. Katrina, do you know what I have behind me?

MRS STOCKMANN

Behind you? No. What have you behind you?

DR. STOCKMANN.

The compact majority!

MRS STOCKMANN

Oh! Is that good for you, Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, indeed; I should think it was good.
[*Rubbing his hands as he walks up and down*] Great

God ! what a delight it is to feel oneself in such brotherly unison with one's fellow townsmen ?

PETRA

And to do so much that's good and useful, father !

DR STOCKMANN.

And all for one's native town, too !

MRS STOCKMANN

There's the bell

DR STOCKMANN

That must be he [*knock at the door*] Come in !

Enter BURGOMASTER STOCKMANN from the hall.

BURGOMASTER.

Good morning.

DR STOCKMANN.

I'm glad to see you, Peter

MRS STOCKMANN

Good morning, brother-in-law How are you ?

BURGOMASTER

Oh, thanks, so-so [*To the Doctor*] Yesterday evening, after office hours, I received from you a dissertation upon the state of the water at the Baths.

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes. Have you read it ?

BURGOMASTER.

I have.

DR STOCKMANN

And what do you think of the affair?

BURGOMASTER

H'm — *[With a sidelong glance]*

MRS STOCKMANN.

Come, Petra

[She and PETRA go into the room on the left]

BURGOMASTER

[After a pause] Was it necessary to make all these investigations behind my back?

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, till I was absolutely certain, I——

BURGOMASTER

And are you absolutely certain now?

DR. STOCKMANN

My paper must surely have convinced you of that

BURGOMASTER

Is it your intention to submit this statement to the Board of Directors, as a sort of official document?

DR STOCKMANN

Of course Something must be done in the matter, and that promptly.

BURGOMASTER

As usual, you use very strong expressions in your statement Amongst other things, you say that what we offer our visitors is a slow poison.

DR STOCKMANN

Why, Peter, what else can it be called? Only think—poisoned water both internally and externally! And that to poor invalids who come to us in all confidence, and pay us handsomely to cure them!

BURGOMASTER.

And then you announce as your conclusion that we must build a sewer to carry off the alleged impurities from the Mill Dale, and must re-lay all the water-pipes

DR STOCKMANN

Yes Can you suggest any other plan?—I know of none

BURGOMASTER

I found a pretext for looking in at the town engineer's this morning, and—in a half-jesting way—I mentioned these alterations as things we might possibly have to consider, at some future time

DR STOCKMANN.

At some future time!

BURGOMASTER.

Of course he smiled at what he thought my extravagance Have you taken the trouble to think what your proposed alterations would cost? From what the engineer said, I gathered that the expenses would probably mount up to several hundred thousand crowns

DR. STOCKMANN

So much as that?

BURGOMASTER

Yes But that is not the worst. The work would take at least two years

DR STOCKMANN

Two years! Do you mean to say two whole years?

BURGOMASTER

At least And what are we to do with the Baths in the meanwhile? Are we to close them? We should have no alternative Do you think any one would come here, if it got abroad that the water was pestilential?

DR STOCKMANN

But, Peter, that's precisely what it is.

BURGOMASTER

And all this now, just now, when the Baths are doing so well! Neighbouring towns, too, are not without their claims to rank as health-resorts Do you think they would not at once set to work to divert the full stream of visitors to themselves? Undoubtedly they would, and we should be left stranded We should probably have to give up the whole costly undertaking; and so you would have ruined your native town

DR. STOCKMANN.

I—ruined——!

BURGOMASTER.

It is only through the Baths that the town has any future worth speaking of You surely know that as well as I do.

DR STOCKMANN

Then what do you think should be done?

BURGOMASTER

I have not succeeded in convincing myself that the condition of the water at the Baths is as serious as your statement represents.

DR STOCKMANN

I tell you it's if anything worse—or will be in the summer, when the hot weather sets in

BURGOMASTER

I repeat that I believe you exaggerate greatly. A competent physician should know what measures to take—he should be able to obviate deleterious influences, and to counteract them in case they should make themselves unmistakably felt

DR STOCKMANN.

Indeed—? And then —?

BURGOMASTER.

The existing water-works are, once for all, a fact, and must naturally be treated as such. But when the time comes, the Directors will probably not be indisposed to consider whether it may not be possible, without unreasonable pecuniary sacrifices, to introduce certain improvements

DR STOCKMANN

And do you imagine I could ever be a party to such dishonesty?

BURGOMASTER.

Dishonesty?

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, it would be dishonesty—a fraud, a lie, an absolute crime against the public, against society as a whole !

BURGOMASTER

I have not, as I before remarked, been able to convince myself that there is really any such imminent danger

DR STOCKMANN

You have ! You must have ! I know that my demonstration is absolutely clear and convincing. And you understand it perfectly, Peter, only you won't admit it. It was you who insisted that both the Bath-buildings and the water-works should be placed where they now are ; and it's that—it's that damned blunder that you won't confess. Pshaw ! Do you think I don't see through you ?

BURGOMASTER

And even it were so ? If I do watch over my reputation with a certain anxiety, I do it for the good of the town. Without moral authority I cannot guide and direct affairs in the way I consider most conducive to the general welfare. Therefore—and on various other grounds—it is of great moment to me that your statement should not be submitted to the Board of Directors. It must be kept back, for the good of the community. Later on I will bring up the matter for discussion, and we will do the best we can, quietly ; but not a word, not a whisper, of this unfortunate business must come to the public ears

DR STOCKMANN.

But it can't be prevented now, my dear Peter.

BURGOMASTER.

It must and shall be prevented.

DR. STOCKMANN

It can't be, I tell you, far too many people know about it already

BURGOMASTER.

Know about it! Who? Surely not those fellows on the *People's Messenger*——?

DR. STOCKMANN.

Oh yes; they know The liberal, independent press will take good care that you do your duty

BURGOMASTER

[*After a short pause*] You are an amazingly reckless man, Thomas Have not you reflected what the consequences of this may be to yourself?

DR. STOCKMANN.

Consequences?—Consequences to me?

BURGOMASTER.

Yes—to you and yours

DR. STOCKMANN.

What the devil do you mean?

BURGOMASTER

I believe I have always shown myself ready and willing to lend you a helping hand

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, you have, and I thank you for it.

BURGOMASTER

I ask for no thanks Indeed, I was in some

measure forced to act as I did—for my own sake I always hoped I should be able to keep you a little in check, if I helped to improve your pecuniary position

DR STOCKMANN

What! So it was only for your own sake——!

BURGOMASTER

In a measure, I say. It is painful for a man in an official position, when his nearest relative goes and compromises himself time after time.

DR STOCKMANN.

And you think I do that?

BURGOMASTER

Yes, unfortunately, you do, without knowing it. Yours is a turbulent, unruly, rebellious spirit. And then you have an unhappy propensity for rushing into print upon every possible and impossible occasion. You no sooner hit upon an idea than you must needs write a newspaper article or a whole pamphlet about it.

DR STOCKMANN.

Isn't it a citizen's duty, when he has conceived a new idea, to communicate it to the public?

BURGOMASTER

Oh, the public has no need for new ideas. The public gets on best with the good old recognised ideas it has already.

DR STOCKMANN

You say that right out!

BURGOMASTER

Yes, I must speak frankly to you for once. Hitherto I have tried to avoid it, for I know how irritable you are, but now I must tell you the truth, Thomas. You have no conception how much you injure yourself by your officiousness. You complain of the authorities, ay, of the Government itself—you cry them down and maintain that you have been slighted, persecuted. But what else can you expect, with your impossible disposition?

DR STOCKMANN

Oh, indeed! So I am impossible, am I?

BURGOMASTER

Yes, Thomas, you are an impossible man to work with. I know that from experience. You have no consideration for any one or any thing, you seem quite to forget that you have me to thank for your position as medical officer of the Baths——

DR STOCKMANN

It was mine by right! Mine, and no one else's! I was the first to discover the town's capabilities as a watering-place, I saw them, and, at that time, I alone. For years I fought single-handed for this idea of mine, I wrote and wrote——

BURGOMASTER

No doubt, but then the right time had not come. Of course, in that out-of-the-world corner, you could not judge of that. As soon as the propitious moment arrived, I—and others—took the matter in hand——

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, and you went and bungled the whole of my glorious plan Oh, we see now what a set of wiseacies you were !

BURGOMASTER

All *I* can see is that you are again seeking an outlet for your pugnacity You want to make an onslaught on your superiors—that is an old habit of yours You cannot endure any authority over you, you look askance at any one who holds a higher post than your own, you regard him as a personal enemy—and then you care nothing what kind of weapon you use against him But now I have shown you how much is at stake for the town, and consequently for me too And therefore I warn you, Thomas, that I am inexorable in the demand I am about to make of you !

DR STOCKMANN.

What demand ?

BURGOMASTER.

As you have not had the sense to refrain from chattering to outsiders about this delicate business, which should have been kept an official secret, of course it cannot now be hushed up All sorts of rumours will get abroad, and evil-disposed persons will invent all sorts of additions to them It will therefore be necessary for you publicly to contradict these rumours

DR STOCKMANN.

I ! How ? I don't understand you ?

BURGOMASTER

We expect that, after further investigation, you

will come to the conclusion that the affair is not nearly so serious or pressing as you had at first imagined

DR STOCKMANN

Aha ! So you expect that ?

BURGOMASTER

Furthermore, we expect you to express your confidence that the Board of Directors will thoroughly and conscientiously carry out all measures for the remedying of any possible defects

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, but that you'll never be able to do, so long as you go on tinkering and patching I tell you that, Peter, and it's my deepest, sincerest conviction——

BURGOMASTER

As an official, you have no right to hold any individual conviction

DR STOCKMANN

[*Starting*] No right to—— ?

BURGOMASTER.

As an official, I say In your private capacity, of course, it is another matter But as a subordinate official of the Baths, you have no right to express any conviction at issue with that of your superiors

DR STOCKMANN

This is too much ! I, a doctor, a man of science, have no right to —— !

BURGOMASTER.

The matter in question is not a purely scientific

one, it is a complex affair, it has both a technical and an economic side

DR STOCKMANN

What the devil do I care what it is! I will be free to speak my mind upon any subject under the sun!

BURGOMASTER

As you please—so long as it does not concern the Baths. With them we forbid you to meddle

DR STOCKMANN

[*Shouts*] You forbid——! You! A set of——

BURGOMASTER

I forbid it—I, your chief; and when I issue an order, you have simply to obey

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Controlling himself*] Upon my word, Peter, if you weren't my brother——

PETRA.

[*Tears open the door*] Father, you shan't submit to this!

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Following her*] Petra, Petra!

BURGOMASTER

Ah! So we have been listening!

MRS STOCKMANN

The partition is so thin, we couldn't help——

PETRA

I stood and listened on purpose

BURGOMASTER.

Well, on the whole, I am not sorry——

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Coming nearer to him*] You spoke to me of forbidding and obeying——

BURGOMASTER.

You have forced me to adopt that tone.

DR STOCKMANN

And am I to give myself the lie, in a public declaration ?

BURGOMASTER

We consider it absolutely necessary that you should issue a statement in the terms indicated.

DR STOCKMANN

And if I do not obey ?

BURGOMASTER

Then we shall ourselves put forth a statement to reassure the public

DR STOCKMANN

Well and good, then I shall write against you I shall stick to my point and prove that *I* am right, and you wrong And what will you do then ?

BURGOMASTER

Then I shall be unable to prevent your dismissal

DR STOCKMANN.

What——!

PETRA.

Father ! Dismissal

MRS STOCKMANN.

Dismissal !

BURGOMASTER

You dismissal from the Baths I shall be compelled to move that notice be given you at once, and that you have henceforth no connection whatever with the Baths

DR STOCKMANN

You would dare to do that !

BURGOMASTER

It is you who are playing the daring game.

PETRA

Uncle, this is a shameful way to treat a man like father !

MRS STOCKMANN

Do be quiet, Petra !

BURGOMASTER.

[*Looking at PETRA*] Aha ! We have opinions of our own already, eh ? To be sure, to be sure !
[*To MRS. STOCKMANN*] Sister-in-law, you are presumably the most rational member of this household. Use all your influence with your husband, try to make him realise what all this will involve both for his family——

DR STOCKMANN

My family concerns myself alone !

BURGOMASTER

——both for his family, I say, and for the town he lives in.

DR STOCKMANN.

It is I that have the real good of the town at heart ' I want to lay bare the evils that, sooner or later, must come to light Ah ' You shall see whether I love my native town.

BURGOMASTER.

You, who, in your blind obstinacy, want to cut off the town's chief source of prosperity '

DR. STOCKMANN.

That source is poisoned, man ! Are you mad ? We live by trafficking in filth and corruption ! The whole of our flourishing social life is rooted in a lie '

BURGOMASTER.

Idle fancies—or worse. The man who scatters broadcast such offensive insinuations against his native place must be an enemy of society.

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Going towards him*] You dare to—— !

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*Throwing herself between them*] Thomas !

PETRA.

[*Seizing her father's arm*] Keep calm, father !

BURGOMASTER.

I will not expose myself to violence You have had your warning now Reflect upon what is due to yourself and to your family Good-bye
[*He goes.*]

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Walking up and down*] And I must put up

with such treatment ! In my own house, Katrina !
What do you say to that !

MRS STOCKMANN

Indeed, it's a shame and a disgrace, Thomas——

PETRA

Oh, if I could only get hold of uncle—— !

DR. STOCKMANN

It's my own fault I ought to have stood up
against them long ago—to have shown my teeth
—and used them too !—And to be called an
enemy of society ! Me ! I won't bear it, by
Heaven, I won't !

MRS STOCKMANN

But my dear Thomas, after all, your brother
has the power——

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, but I have the right

MRS. STOCKMANN.

Ah yes, right, right ! What good does it do to
have the right, if you haven't any might ?

PETRA

Oh, mother—how can you talk so ?

DR. STOCKMANN

What ! No good, in a free community, to have
right on your side ? What an absurd idea,
Katrina ! And besides—haven't I the free and
independent press before me—and the compact
majority at my back ? That is might enough, I
should think !

MRS STOCKMANN

Why, good heavens, Thomas ' you're surely not thinking of—— ?

DR. STOCKMANN.

What am I not thinking of ?

MRS STOCKMANN.

——of setting yourself up against your brother,
I mean

DR. STOCKMANN

What the devil would you have me do, if not stick to what is right and true ?

PETRA

Yes, that's what I should like to know ?

MRS STOCKMANN

But it will be of no earthly use .If they won't, they won't

DR. STOCKMANN

Ho-ho, Katrina ' just wait a while, and you shall see whether I can fight my battles to the end

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, to the end of getting your dismissal , that is what will happen.

DR. STOCKMANN

Well then, I shall at any rate have done my duty towards the public, towards society—I who am called an enemy of society '

MRS STOCKMANN

But towards your family, Thomas ? Towards us at home ? Do you think that is doing your duty towards those who are dependent on you ?

PETRA

Oh, mother, don't always think first of us.

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, it's easy for you to talk, you can stand alone if need be — But remember the boys, Thomas, and think a little of yourself too, and of me——

DR STOCKMANN

You're surely out of your senses, Katrina! If I were to be such a pitiful coward as to knuckle under to this Peter and his confounded crew—should I ever have another happy hour in all my life?

MRS STOCKMANN

I don't know about that, but God preserve us from the happiness we shall all of us have if you persist in defying them. There you will be again, with nothing to live on, with no regular income. I should have thought we had had enough of that in the old days. Remember them, Thomas, think of what it all means.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Struggling with himself and clenching his hands*]
And this is what these jacks-in-office can bring upon a free and honest man! Isn't it revolting, Katrina?

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, no doubt they are treating you shamefully. But God knows there's plenty of injustice one must just submit to in this world—Here are the boys, Thomas. Look at them! What is to become of them? Oh no, no! you can never have the heart——

EILIF and MORTEN, with school-books, have meanwhile entered

DR STOCKMANN

The boys——' [*With a sudden access of firmness and decision*] Never, though the whole earth should crumble, will I bow my neck beneath the yoke
[*Goes towards his room.*]

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Following him*] Thomas—what are you going to do?

DR STOCKMANN

[*At the door*] I must have the right to look my boys in the face when they have grown into free men
[*Goes into his room.*]

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Bursts into tears*] Ah, God help us all!

PETRA

Father is true to the core He will never give in!
[*The boys ask wonderingly what it all means,* PETRA signs to them to be quiet

ACT THIRD.

The Editor's Room of the "People's Messenger" In the background, to the left, an entrance-door to the right another door, with glass panes, through which can be seen the composing-room. A door in the right-hand wall. In the middle of the room a large table covered with papers, newspapers, and books. In front, on the left, a window, and by it a desk with a high stool. A couple of arm-chairs beside the table, some other chairs along the walls. The room is dingy and cheerless, the furniture shabby, the arm-chairs dirty and torn. In the composing-room are seen a few compositors at work, further back, a hand-press in operation.

HOVSTAD *is seated at the desk, writing. Presently BILLING enters from the right, with the DOCTOR'S manuscript in his hand.*

BILLING.

Well, I must say——'

HOVSTAD

[*Writing*] Have you read it through?

BILLING

[*Laying the MS. on the desk*] Yes, I should think I had

HOVSTAD

Don't you think the Doctor comes out strong?

BILLING

Strong! Why, strike me dead if he isn't crushing! Every word falls like a—well, like a sledge-hammer

HOVSTAD

Yes, but these fellows won't collapse at the first blow

BILLING.

True enough, but we'll keep on hammering away, blow after blow, till the whole officialdom comes crashing down. As I sat in there reading that article, I seemed to hear the revolution thundering afar

HOVSTAD

[*Turning round*] Hush! Don't let Aslaksen hear that

BILLING

[*In a lower voice*] Aslaksen's a white-livered, cowardly fellow without a spark of manhood in him. But this time you'll surely carry your point? Eh? You'll print the Doctor's paper?

HOVSTAD

Yes, if only the Burgomaster doesn't give in——

BILLING

That would be deuced annoying

HOVSTAD

Well, whatever happens, fortunately we can turn the situation to account. If the Burgomaster won't agree to the Doctor's proposal, he'll have all the small middle-class down upon him—all the House-owners' Association, and the rest of them. And if he does agree to it, he'll fall out with the whole

ciw of big shareholders in the Baths, who have hitherto been his main support——

BILLING

Yes, of course, for no doubt they'll have to fork out a lot of money——

Hovstad

You may take your oath of that And then, don't you see, when the ring is broken up, we'll din it into the public day by day that the Burgo-master is incompetent in every respect, and that all responsible positions in the town, the whole municipal government in short, must be entrusted to men of liberal ideas

BILLING

Strike me dead if that isn't the square truth ! I see it—I see it we are on the eve of a revolution !
[A knock at the door.

Hovstad.

Hush ! [Calls] Come in !

Dr Stockmann *enters from the back, left*

Hovstad

[Going towards him] Ah, here is the Doctor.
Well ?

Dr Stockmann

Print away, Mr. Hovstad !

Hovstad

So it has come to that ?

BILLING.

Hurrah !

DR STOCKMANN

Print away, I tell you To be sure it has come to that Since they will have it so, they must. War is declared, Mr Billing !

BILLING

War to the knife, say I ! War to the death, Doctor !

DR STOCKMANN

This article is only the beginning I have four or five others sketched out in my head already But where do you keep Aslaksen ?

BILLING

[*Calling into the printing-room*] Aslaksen ! just come here a moment

HOVSTAD

Four or five more articles, eh ? On the same subject ?

DR STOCKMANN

Oh no—not at all, my dear fellow No, they will deal with quite different matters But they're all of a piece with the water-works and sewer question One thing leads to another It's just like beginning to pick at an old house, don't you know ?

BILLING

Strike me dead, but that's true ! You feel you can't leave off till you've pulled the whole lumber-heap to pieces

ASLAKSEN

[*Enters from the printing-room*] Pulled to pieces ! Surely the Doctor isn't thinking of pulling the Baths to pieces ?

HOVSTAD

Not at all Don't be alarmed

DR STOCKMANN

No, we were talking of something quite different
Well, what do you think of my article, Mr Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

I think it's simply a masterpiece——

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, isn't it? I'm glad you think so—very glad.

HOVSTAD

It's so clear and to the point One doesn't in
the least need to be a specialist to understand the
gist of it I am certain every intelligent man will
be on your side

ASLAKSEN

And all the prudent ones too, I hope?

BILLING

Both the prudent and imprudent—in fact,
almost the whole town.

ASLAKSEN

Then I suppose we may venture to print it.

DR STOCKMANN.

I should think so!

HOVSTAD.

It shall go in to-morrow

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, plague take it, not a day must be lost.

Look here, Mr Aslaksen, this is what I wanted to ask you won't you take personal charge of the article ?

ASLAKSEN

Certainly I will

DR STOCKMANN

Be as careful as if it were gold No printers' errors, every word is important I shall look in again presently, perhaps you'll be able to let me see a proof—Ah ' I can't tell you how I long to have the thing in print—to see it launched——

BILLING

Yes, like a thunderbolt '

DR STOCKMANN

——and submitted to the judgment of every intelligent citizen Oh, you have no idea what I have had to put up with to-day I've been threatened with all sorts of things I was to be robbed of my clearest rights as a human being——

BILLING

What ' Your rights as a human being !

DR STOCKMANN

——I was to humble myself, and eat the dust ; I was to set my personal interests above my deepest, holiest convictions——

BILLING

Strike me dead, but that's too outrageous

HOVSTAD

Oh, what can you expect from that quarter ?

DR STOCKMANN

But they shall find they were mistaken in me, they shall learn that in black and white, I promise them! I shall throw myself into the breach every day in the *Messenger*, bombard them with one explosive article after another——

ASLAKSEN.

Yes, but look here——

BILLING

Hurrah! It's war! War!

DR STOCKMANN

I shall smite them to the earth, I shall crush them, I shall level their entrenchments to the ground in the eyes of all right-thinking men! That's what I shall do!

ASLAKSEN

But above all things be temperate, Doctor; bombard with moderation——

BILLING

Not at all, not at all! Don't spare the dynamite!

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Going on imperturbably*] For now it's no mere question of water-works and sewers, you see. No, the whole community must be purged, disinfected——

BILLING

There sounds the word of salvation!

DR. STOCKMANN

All the old bunglers must be sent packing, you

understand And that in every possible department ! Such endless vistas have opened out before me to-day I am not quite clear about everything yet, but I shall see my way presently It's young and vigorous standard-bearers we must look for, my friends, we must have new captains at all the outposts

BILLING.

Hear, hear !

DR STOCKMANN

And if only we hold together, it will go so smoothly, so smoothly ! The whole revolution will glide off the stocks just like a ship Don't you think so ?

HOVSTAD

For my part, I believe we have now every prospect of placing our municipal affairs in the right hands.

ASLAKSEN

And if only we proceed with moderation, I really don't think there can be any danger

DR STOCKMANN

Who the devil cares whether there's danger or not ! What I do, I do in the name of truth and for conscience' sake

HOVSTAD

You are a man to be backed up, Doctor.

ASLAKSEN

Yes, there's no doubt the Doctor is a true friend to the town, he's what I call a friend of society

BILLING

Strike me dead if Dr Stockmann isn't a Friend of the People, Aslaksen !

ASLAKSEN

I have no doubt the House-owners' Association will soon adopt that expression

DR STOCKMANN

[*Shaking their hands, deeply moved*] Thanks, thanks, my dear, faithful friends, it does me good to hear you. My respected brother called me something very different. Never mind ! Trust me to pay him back with interest ! But I must be off now to see a poor devil of a patient. I shall look in again, though. Be sure you look after the article, Mr Aslaksen, and, whatever you do, don't leave out any of my notes of exclamation ! Rather put in a few more ! Well, good-bye for the present, good-bye, good-bye.

[*Mutual salutations while they accompany him to the door. He goes out.*]

HOVSTAD

He will be invaluable to us

ASLAKSEN

Yes, so long as he confines himself to this matter of the Baths. But if he goes further, it will scarcely be advisable to follow him.

HOVSTAD

H'm—that entirely depends on——

BILLING .

You're always so confoundedly timid, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN

Timid? Yes, when it's a question of attacking local authorities, I am timid, Mr Billing, I have learnt caution in the school of experience, let me tell you. But start me on the higher politics, confront me with the Government itself, and then see if I'm timid.

BILLING

No, you're not, but that's just where your inconsistency comes in.

ASLAKSEN

The fact is, I am keenly alive to my responsibilities. If you attack the Government, you at least do society no harm, for the men attacked don't care a straw, you see—they stay where they are all the same. But local authorities can be turned out, and then we might get some incompetent set into power, to the irreparable injury both of house-owners and other people.

HOVSTAD

But the education of citizens by self-government—do you never think of that?

ASLAKSEN

When a man has solid interests to protect, he can't think of everything, Mr Hovstad.

HOVSTAD

Then I hope I may never have solid interests to protect.

BILLING.

Hear, hear!

ASLAKSEN

[*Smiling*] H'm! [*Points to the desk*] Governor Stensgård¹ sat in that editorial chair before you.

BILLING

[*Spitting*] Pooh! A turncoat like that!

HOVSTAD

I am no weathercock—and never will be.

ASLAKSEN

A politician should never be too sure of anything on earth, Mr Hovstad. And as for you, Mr Billing, you ought to take in a reef or two, I should say, now that you are applying for the secretaryship to the Town Council.

BILLING,

I——!

HOVSTAD. •

Is that so, Billing?

BILLING

Well, yes—but, deuce take it, you understand, I'm only doing it to spite their high-mightinesses.

ASLAKSEN

Well, that has nothing to do with me. But if I am to be accused of cowardice and inconsistency, I should just like to point out this. My political record is open to every one. I have not changed at all, except in becoming more moderate. My

¹ It will be remembered that Aslaksen figures in *The League of Youth*, of which Stensgård is the central character. Stensgård, we see, has justified Lundestad's prophecy by attaining the high administrative dignity of "Stiftamtmand," here roughly translated "Governor."

heart still belongs to the people, but I don't deny that my reason inclines somewhat towards the authorities—the local ones, I mean

[*Goes into the printing-room*]

BILLING

Don't you think we should try to get rid of him, Hovstad?

HOVSTAD

Do you know of any one else that will pay for our paper and printing?

BILLING

What a confounded nuisance it is to have no capital!

HOVSTAD

[*Sitting down by the desk*] Yes, if we only had that——

BILLING

Suppose you applied to Dr. Stockmann?

HOVSTAD

[*Turning over his papers*] What would be the good? He hasn't a rap

BILLING

No, but he has a good man behind him—old Morten Kul—"The Badger," as they call him

HOVSTAD

[*Writing*] Are you so sure he has money?

BILLING

Yes, strike me dead if he hasn't! And part of it must certainly go to Stockmann's family. He's bound to provide for—for the children at any rate.

HOVSTAD

[*Half turning*] Are you counting on that?

BILLING

Counting? How should I be counting on it?

HOVSTAD

Best not! And that secretaryship you shouldn't count on either, for I can assure you you won't get it

BILLING

Do you think I don't know that? A refusal is the very thing I want. Such a rebuff fires the spirit of opposition in you, gives you a fresh supply of gall, as it were, and that's just what you need in a god-foisaken hole like this, where anything really stimulating so seldom happens.

HOVSTAD

[*Writing*] Yes, yes

BILLING.

Well—they shall soon hear from me!—Now I'll go and write the appeal to the House-owners' Association.

[*Goes into the room on the right.*]

HOVSTAD

[*Sits at his desk, biting his penholder, and says slowly.*] H'm—so that's the way of it.—[*A knock at the door*] Come in

PETRA *enters from the back, left.*

HOVSTAD

[*Rising*] What! Is it you? Here?

PETRA

Yes, please excuse me——

HOVSTAD

[*Offering her an arm-chair.*] Won't you sit down?

PETRA

No, thanks; I must go again directly

HOVSTAD

Perhaps you bring a message from your father——?

PETRA

No, I have come on my own account [*Takes a book from the pocket of her cloak*] Here is that English story

HOVSTAD

Why have you brought it back?

PETRA

Because I won't translate it

HOVSTAD

But you promised——

PETRA

Yes, but then I hadn't read it I suppose you have not read it either?

HOVSTAD .

No, you know I can't read English, but——

PETRA

Exactly; and that's why I wanted to tell you that you must find something else [*Putting the*

book on the table.] This will never do for the Messenger

Hovstad

Why not?

Petra

Because it flies in the face of all your convictions

Hovstad.

Well, for that matter——

Petra

You don't understand me. It makes out that a supernatural power looks after the so-called good people in this world, and turns everything to their advantage at last, while all the so-called bad people are punished

Hovstad

Yes, but that's all right. That's the very thing the public like

Petra

And would you supply the public with such stuff? You don't believe a word of it yourself. You know well enough that things do not really happen like that

Hovstad

Of course not, but an editor can't always do as he likes. He has often to humour people's fancies in minor matters. After all, politics is the chief thing in life—at any rate for a newspaper; and if I want the people to follow me along the path of emancipation and progress, I mustn't scare them away. If they find a moral story like this down

in the cellar,¹ they are all the more ready to take in what we tell them above—they feel themselves safer

PETRA

For shame! You're not such a hypocrite as to set traps like that for your readers. You're not a spider.

HOVSTAD.

[*Smiling*] Thanks for your good opinion. It's true that the idea is Billing's, not mine

PETRA.

Mr. Billing's!

HOVSTAD

Yes, at least he was talking in that strain the other day. It was Billing that was so anxious to get the story into the paper, I don't even know the book.

PETRA

But how can Mr. Billing, with his advanced views——

HOVSTAD

Well, Billing is many-sided. He's applying for the secretaryship to the Town Council, I hear

PETRA

I don't believe that, Mr. Hovstad. How could he descend to such a thing?

HOVSTAD

That you must ask him.

¹ The reference is to the continental feuilleton at the foot of the page.

PETRA

I could never have thought it of Billing '

HOVSTAD

[*Looking more closely at her*] No? Is it such a surprise to you?

PETRA

Yes And yet—perhaps not. Oh, I don't know——

HOVSTAD

We journalists are not worth much, Miss Petra.

PETRA

Do you really say that?

HOVSTAD

I think so, now and then

PETRA

Yes, in the little every-day squabbles—that I can understand But now that you have taken up a great cause——

HOVSTAD

You mean this affair of your father's?

PETRA

Of course I should think you must feel yourself worth more than the general run of people now

HOVSTAD

Yes, to-day I do feel something of the sort.

PETRA

Yes, surely you must Oh, it's a glorious career you have chosen ' To be the pioneer of unrecog-

nised truths and new and daring ways of thought'—even, if that were all, to stand forth fearlessly in support of an injured man——

HOVSTAD

Especially when the injured man is—I hardly know how to put it——

PETRA

You mean when he is so upright and true ?

HOVSTAD

[*In a low voice*] I mean—especially when he is your father

PETRA

[*Suddenly taken aback*] That ?

HOVSTAD

Yes, Petia—Miss Petra

PETRA

So that is your chief thought, is it ? Not the cause itself ? Not the truth ? Not father's great, warm heart ?

HOVSTAD

Oh, that too, of course

PETRA

No, thank you, you said too much that time, Mr Hovstad. Now I shall never trust you again, in anything

HOVSTAD

Can you be so hard on me because it's mainly for your sake—— ?

PETRA

What I blame you for is that you have not acted

straightforwardly towards father You have talked to him as if you cared only for the truth and the good of the community You have trifled with both father and me You are not the man you pretended to be And that I will never forgive you—never

Hovstad

You shouldn't say that so bitterly, Miss Petra—least of all now

Petra.

Why not now ?

Hovstad

Because your father cannot do without my help

Petra

[*Measuring him from head to foot*] So you are capable of that, too ? Oh, shame !

Hovstad

No, no I spoke without thinking You mustn't believe that of me

Petra

I know what to believe Good-bye

ASLAKSEN *enters from printing-room, hurriedly and mysteriously*

Aslaksen

What do you think, Mr Hovstad—[*Seeing Petra*] Ow, that's awkward——

Petra

Well, there is the book You must give it to some one else. [*Going towards the main door*]

HOVSTAD

[*Following her*] But, Miss Petra——

PETRA

Good-bye.

[*She goes*]

ASLAKSEN

I say, Mr Hovstad'

HOVSTAD

Well well, what is it?

ASLAKSEN

The Burgomaster's out there, in the printing-office.

HOVSTAD

The Burgomaster?

ASLAKSEN

Yes He wants to speak to you, he came in by the back way—he didn't want to be seen, you understand.

HOVSTAD

What can be the meaning of this? Stop, I'll go myself——

[*Goes towards the printing-room, opens the door, bows and invites the BURGOMASTER to enter*]

HOVSTAD.

Keep a look-out, Aslaksen, that no one——

ASLAKSEN

I understand

[*Goes into the printing-room*]

BURGOMASTER

You didn't expect to see me here, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD

No, I cannot say that I did

BURGOMASTER

[*Looking about him*] You are very comfortably installed here—capital quarters

HOVSTAD.

Oh——

BURGOMASTER

And here have I come, without with your leave or by your leave, to take up your time——

HOVSTAD

You are very welcome, Burgomaster, I am at your service Let me take your cap and stick [*He does so, and puts them on a chair*] And won't you be seated?

BURGOMASTER.

[*Sitting down by the table*] Thanks [HOVSTAD *also sits by the table*] I have been much—very much worried to day, Mr Hovstad

HOVSTAD

Really? Well, I suppose with all your various duties, Burgomaster——

BURGOMASTER

It is the Doctor that has been causing me annoyance to-day.

HOVSTAD

Indeed! The Doctor?

BURGOMASTER

He has written a sort of memorandum to the

Directois about some alleged shortcomings in the Baths

HOVSTAD

Has he really ?

BURGOMASTER

Yes, hasn't he told you ? I thought he said——

HOVSTAD

Oh yes, by-the-bye, he did mention something——

ASLAKSEN

[*From the printing-office.*] I've just come for the manuscript——

HOVSTAD

[*In a tone of vexation*] Oh !——there it is on the desk

ASLAKSEN.

[*Finding it*] All right

BURGOMASTER

Why, that is the very thing——

ASLAKSEN

Yes, this is the Doctor's article, Burgomaster.

HOVSTAD

Oh, is that what you were speaking of ?

BURGOMASTER

Precisely What do you think of it ?

HOVSTAD

I have no technical knowledge of the matter, and I've only glanced through it.

BURGOMASTER

And yet you are going to print it'

HOVSTAD

I can't very well refuse a signed communication——

ASLAKSEN

I have nothing to do with the editing of the paper, Burgomaster——

BURGOMASTER

Of course not

ASLAKSEN

I merely print what is placed in my hands.

BURGOMASTER.

Quite right, quite right

ASLAKSEN

So I must—— [*Goes towards the printing-room*]

BURGOMASTER.

No, stop a moment, Mr Aslaksen. With your permission, Mr. Hovstad——

HOVSTAD.

By all means, Burgomaster

BURGOMASTER

You are a discreet and thoughtful man, Mr. Aslaksen

ASLAKSEN

I am glad you think so, Burgomaster

BURGOMASTER.

And a man of very wide influence

ASLAKSEN

Well—chiefly among the lower middle-class.

BURGOMASTER

The small taxpayers form the majority—here as everywhere.

ASLAKSEN.

That's very true

BURGOMASTER

And I have no doubt that you know the general feeling among them Am I right ?

ASLAKSEN

Yes, I think I may say that I do, Burgomaster

BURGOMASTER

Well—since our townsfolk of the poorer class appear to be so heroically eager to make sacrifices——

ASLAKSEN

How so ?

HOVSTAD.

Sacrifices ?

BURGOMASTER

It is a pleasing evidence of public spirit—a most pleasing evidence I admit it is more than I should quite have expected But, of course, you know public feeling better than I do.

ASLAKSEN

Yes but, Burgomaster——

BURGOMASTER

And assuredly it is no small sacrifice the town will have to make.

Hovstad

The town?

Aslaksen

But I don't understand——. It's the Baths——

Burgomaster

At a rough provisional estimate, the alterations the Doctor thinks desirable will come to two or three hundred thousand crowns

Aslaksen

That's a lot of money, but——

Burgomaster

Of course we shall be obliged to raise a municipal loan.

Hovstad

[*Rising*] You surely can't mean that the town——?

Aslaksen

Would you come upon the rates? Upon the scanty savings of the lower middle-class?

Burgomaster

Why, my dear Mr Aslaksen, where else are the funds to come from?

Aslaksen.

The proprietors of the Baths must see to that.

Burgomaster.

The proprietors are not in a position to go to any further expense

Aslaksen.

Are you quite sure of that, Burgomaster?

BURGOMASTER

I have positive information. So if these extensive alterations are called for, the town itself will have to bear the cost.

ASLAKSEN

Oh, plague take it all—I beg your pardon!—but this is quite another matter, Mr. Hovstad.

HOVSTAD

Yes, it certainly is.

BURGOMASTER.

The worst of it is, that we shall be obliged to close the establishment for a couple of years.

HOVSTAD

To close it? Completely?

ASLAKSEN

For two years!

BURGOMASTER.

Yes, the work will require that time—at least.

ASLAKSEN

But, damn it all! we can't stand that, Burgo-master! What are we house-owners to live on in the meantime?

BURGOMASTER

It's extremely difficult to say, Mr. Aslaksen. But what would you have us do? Do you think a single visitor will come here if we go about making them fancy that the water is poisoned, that the place is pestilential, that the whole town——

ASLAKSEN.

And it's all nothing but fancy?

BURGOMASTER

With the best will in the world, I have failed to convince myself that it is anything else

ASLAKSEN

In that case it's simply inexcusable of Dr Stockmann—I beg your pardon, Burgomaster, but——

BURGOMASTER

I'm sorry to say you are only speaking the truth, Mr Aslaksen. Unfortunately, my brother has always been noted for his rashness

ASLAKSEN

And yet you want to back him up in this, Mr Hovstad!

HOVSTAD

But who could possibly imagine that——?

BURGOMASTER.

I have drawn up a short statement of the facts, as they appear from a sober-minded standpoint, and I have intimated that any drawbacks that may possibly exist can no doubt be remedied by measures compatible with the finances of the Baths

HOVSTAD

Have you the article with you, Burgomaster?

BURGOMASTER

[*Feeling in his pockets*] Yes, I brought it with me, in case you——

ASLAKSEN

[*Quickly.*] Plague take it, there he is!

BURGOMASTER

Who? My brother?

HOVSTAD.

Where? where?

ASLAKSEN

He's coming through the composing-room.

BURGOMASTER

Most unfortunate! I don't want to meet him here, and yet there are several things I want to talk to you about

HOVSTAD

[*Pointing to the door on the right*] Go in there for a moment

BURGOMASTER

But——?

HOVSTAD

You'll find nobody but Billing there

ASLAKSEN

Quick, quick, Burgomaster; he's just coming.

BURGOMASTER

Very well, then But try to get rid of him quickly

[*He goes out by the door on the right, which ASLAKSEN opens, and closes behind him*

Hovstad

Pretend to be busy, Aslaksen

[*He sits down and writes* Aslaksen turns over a heap of newspapers on a chair. right

Dr Stockmann

[*Entering from the composing-room*] Here I am, back again [*Puts down his hat and stick*]

Hovstad

[*Writing.*] Aheady, Doctor? Make haste with what we were speaking of, Aslaksen We've no time to lose to-day

Dr Stockmann

[*To Aslaksen*] No proof yet, I hear.

Aslaksen

[*Without turning round*] No, how could you expect it?

Dr Stockmann

Of course not, but you understand my impatience I can have no rest or peace until I see the thing in print.

Hovstad

H'm; it will take a good while yet. Don't you think so, Aslaksen?

Aslaksen.

I'm afraid it will

Dr. Stockmann

All right, all right, my good friend; then I shall look in again. I'll look in twice if necessary. With so much at stake—the welfare of the whole

town—one mustn't grudge a little trouble [*Is on the point of going but stops and comes back*] Oh, by the way—there's one other thing I must speak to you about

Hovstad

Excuse me, wouldn't some other time—?

DR STOCKMANN

I can tell you in two words You see it's this when people read my article in the paper to-morrow, and find I have spent the whole winter working quietly for the good of the town—

Hovstad

Yes but, Doctor—

DR STOCKMANN

I know what you're going to say You don't think it was a bit more than my duty—my simple duty as a citizen Of course I know that, as well as you do But you see, my fellow townsmen—good Lord! the poor souls think so much of me—

Aslaksen

Yes, the townspeople have hitherto thought very highly of you, Doctor

DR STOCKMANN

That's exactly why I'm afraid that— What I wanted to say was this when all this comes to them—especially to the poorer classes—as a summons to take the affairs of the town into their own hands for the future—

Hovstad

[*Rising.*] H'm, Doctor, I won't conceal from you—

DR STOCKMANN.

Aha ! I thought there was something brewing
But I won't hear of it If they are getting up
anything of that sort——

HOVSTAD.

Of what sort ?

DR STOCKMANN

Well, anything of any sort—a procession with
banners, or a banquet, or a subscription for a
testimonial, or whatever it may be—you must
give me your solemn promise to put a stop to it
And you too, Mr Aslaksen, do you hear ?

HOVSTAD

Excuse me, Doctor, we may as well tell you
the whole truth first as last——

MRS STOCKMANN *enters from the back, left*

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*Seeing the Doctor*] Ah ! just as I thought

HOVSTAD

[*Going towards her*] Mrs Stockmann, too ?

DR STOCKMANN

What the devil do you want here, Katrina ?

MRS STOCKMANN

You know very well what I want

HOVSTAD

Won't you sit down ? Or perhaps——

MRS STOCKMANN

Thanks, please don't trouble And you must

forgive my following my husband here, remember, I am the mother of three children

DR. STOCKMANN

Stuff and nonsense! We all know that well enough

MRS STOCKMANN

Well, it doesn't look as if you thought very much about your wife and children to-day, or you wouldn't be so ready to plunge us all into ruin

DR. STOCKMANN

Are you quite mad, Katina! Has a man with a wife and children no right to proclaim the truth? Has he no right to be an active and useful citizen? Has he no right to do his duty by the town he lives in?

MRS STOCKMANN

Everything in moderation, Thomas!

ASLAKSEN

That's just what I say Moderation in everything

MRS STOCKMANN

You are doing us a great wrong, Mr Hovstad, in enticing my husband away from home and home, and befooling him in this way

HOVSTAD

I am not befooling any one——

DR. STOCKMANN

Befooling! Do you think I should let myself be befooled?

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, that's just what you do I know very well that you are the cleverest man in the town, but you're very easily made a fool of, Thomas [To HOVSTAD] Remember that he loses his post at the Baths if you print what he has written——

ASLAKSEN.

What '

HOVSTED

Well now, really, Doctor——

DR STOCKMANN

[*Laughing*] Ha ha ' just let them try—' No no, my dear, they'll think twice about that I have the compact majority behind me, you see '

MRS STOCKMANN

That's just the misfortune, that you should have such a horrid thing behind you "

DR STOCKMANN.

Nonsense, Katrina,—you go home and look after your house, and let me take care of society. How can you be in such a fright when you see me so confident and happy? [*Rubbing his hands and walking up and down*] Truth and the People must win the day, you may be perfectly sure of that Oh! I can see all our free-souled citizens standing shoulder to shoulder like a conquering army——! [*Stopping by a chair*] Why, what the devil is that?

ASLAKSEN.

[*Looking at it*] Oh Lord '

HOVSTAD

[*The same*] H'm—

DR STOCKMANN

Why, here's the top-knot of authority !

[*He takes the BURGOMASTER'S official cap carefully between the tips of his fingers and holds it up*]

MRS STOCKMANN.

The Burgomaster's cap !

DR STOCKMANN

And here's the staff of office, too ! But how in the devil's name did they—— ?

HOVSTAD

Well then——

DR STOCKMANN

Ah, I understand ! He has been here to talk you over Ha, hā ! He reckoned without his host that time ! And when he caught sight of me in the printing-room—[*Bursts out laughing*—]—he took to his heels, eh, Mi Aslaksen ?

ASLAKSEN

[*Hurriedly*] Exactly, he took to his heels, Doctor

DR. STOCKMANN

Made off without his stick and——. No, that won't do ! Peter never left anything behind him But where the devil have you stowed him ? Ah—in here, of course Now you shall see, Katina

MRS STOCKMANN.

Thomas—I implore you—— !

ASLAKSEN

Take care, Doctor !

[DR STOCKMANN *has put on the BURGOMASTER'S cap and grasped his stick, he now goes up to the door, throws it open, and makes a military salute*

The BURGOMASTER enters, red with anger Behind him comes BILLING

BURGOMASTER

What is the meaning of these antics ?

DR STOCKMANN

Respect, my good Peter ! Now, it's I that am in power in this town [He struts up and down

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Almost in tears*] Oh, Thomas !

BURGOMASTER

[*Following him*] Give me my cap and stick !

DR STOCKMANN

[*As before*] You may be Chief of Police, but I am Burgomaster I am master of the whole town I tell you !

BURGOMASTER

Put down my cap, I say Remember it is an official cap, as by law prescribed !

DR STOCKMANN

Pshaw ! Do you think the awakening lion of the democracy will let itself be scared by a gold-laced cap ? There's to be a revolution in the town tomorrow, let me tell you You threatened me with

dismissal; but now *I* dismiss you—dismiss you from all your offices of trust— You think I can't do it?—Oh, yes, I can! I have the irresistible forces of society on my side Hovstad and Billing will thunder in the *People's Messenger*, and Aslaksen will take the field at the head of the House-owners' Association——

ASLAKSEN

No, Doctor, I shall not

DR STOCKMANN

Why, of course you will——

BURGOMASTER

Aha! Perhaps Mr Hovstad would like to join the agitation after all?

HOVSTAD

No, Burgomaster

ASLAKSEN

No, Mr Hovstad isn't such a fool as to ruin both himself and the paper for the sake of a delusion

DR STOCKMANN

[*Looking about him*] What does all this mean?

HOVSTAD

You have presented your case in a false light, Doctor, therefore I am unable to give you my support

BILLING

And after what the Burgomaster has been so kind as to explain to me, I——

DR. STOCKMANN.

In a false light! Well, I am responsible for that.

Just you print my article, and I promise you I shall prove it up to the hilt

HOVSTAD

I shall not print it. I cannot, and will not, and dare not print it

DR STOCKMANN

You dare not? What nonsense is this? You are editor; and I suppose it's the editor that controls a paper.

ASLAKSEN.

No, it's the subscribers, Doctor

BURGOMASTER

Fortunately

ASLAKSEN.

It's public opinion, the enlightened majority, the house-owners and all the rest. It's they who control a paper

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Calmly*] And all these powers I have against me?

ASLAKSEN

Yes, you have. It would mean absolute ruin for the town if your article were inserted

DR. STOCKMANN

So that is the way of it!

BURGOMASTER.

My hat and stick!

[DR STOCKMANN *takes off the cap and lays it on the table along with the stick*

BURGOMASTER

[*Taking them both*] Your term of office has come to an untimely end

DR STOCKMANN.

The end is not yet [*To HOVSTAD*] So you are quite determined not to print my article in the *Messenger*?

HOVSTAD

Quite, for the sake of your family, if for no other reason.

MRS STOCKMANN

Oh, be kind enough to leave his family out of the question, Mr. Hovstad

BURGOMASTER

[*Takes a manuscript from his pocket*] When this appears, the public will be in possession of all necessary information, it is an authentic statement I place it in your hands

HOVSTAD

[*Taking the MS*] Good It shall appear in due course

DR STOCKMANN

And not mine! You imagine you can kill me, and the truth by a conspiracy of silence! But it won't be so easy at you think Mr Aslaksen, will you be good enough to print my article at once, as a pamphlet? I'll pay for it myself, and be my own publisher. I'll have four hundred copies—no, five—six hundred

ASLAKSEN

No If you offered me its weight in gold, I dare

not lend my press to such a purpose, Doctor I daren't fly in the face of public opinion You won't get it printed anywhere in the whole town

DR STOCKMANN

Then give it me back

HOVSTAD.

[*Handing him the MS*] By all means

DR STOCKMANN

[*Taking up his hat and cane*] It shall be made public all the same I shall read it at a great mass meeting, all my fellow citizens shall hear the voice of truth !

BURGOMASTER

Not a single society in the town would let you their hall for such a purpose

ASLAKSEN

Not one, I'm quite certain

BILLING.

No, strike me dead if they would !

MRS STOCKMANN

That would be too disgraceful ! Why do they turn against you like this, every one of them ?

DR. STOCKMANN.

[*Irritated*] I'll tell you why Its because in this town all the men are old women—like you They all think of nothing but their families, not of the general good,

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Taking his arm*] Then I'll show them that an
—an old woman can be a man for once in a way
For now I'll stand by you, Thomas

DR STOCKMANN

Bravely said, Katrina! I swear by my soul and
conscience the truth shall out! If they won't let
me a hall, I'll hire a drum and march through the
town with it, and I'll read my paper at every
street corner

BURGOMASTER

You can scarcely be such a raving lunatic as
that?

DR STOCKMANN

I am.

ASLAKSEN

You would not get a single man in the whole
town to go with you

* BILLING

No, strike me dead if you would!

MRS STOCKMANN

Don't give in, Thomas I'll ask the boys to go
with you

DR STOCKMANN.

That's a splendid idea!

MRS STOCKMANN

Morten will be delighted, and Elif will go too,
I daresay

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, and so will Petra! And you yourself,
Katrina!

MRS STOCKMANN

No no, not I But I'll stand at the window and
watch you—that I will

DR STOCKMANN

[*Throwing his arms about her and kissing her*]
Thank you for that! Now, my good sirs, we're
ready for the fight! Now we shall see whether
your despicable tactics can stop the mouth of the
patriot who wants to purge society!

[*He and his wife go out together by the door
in the back, left*]

BURGOMASTER

[*Shaking his head dubiously*] Now he has turned
her head too!

ACT FOURTH

A large old-fashioned room in CAPTAIN HORSTER'S house. An open folding-door in the background leads to an anteroom. In the wall on the left are three windows. About the middle of the opposite wall is a platform, and on it a small table, two candles a water-bottle and glass, and a bell. For the rest, the room is lighted by sconces placed between the windows. In front, on the left, is a table with a candle on it, and by it a chair. In front, to the right, a door, and near it a few chairs.

Large assemblage of all classes of townsfolk. In the crowd are a few women and schoolboys. More and more people gradually stream in from the back until the room is quite full.

FIRST CITIZEN

[*To another standing near him*] So you're here too, Lamstad ?

SECOND CITIZEN

I never miss a public meeting

A BYSTANDER

I suppose you've brought your whistle ?

SECOND CITIZEN

Of course I have ; haven't you ?

THIRD CITIZEN

I should think so And Skipper Evensen said
he'd bring a thumping big horn

SECOND CITIZEN.

He's a good 'un, is Evensen !

[*Laughter in the group.*]

A FOURTH CITIZEN

[*Joining them*] I say, what's it all about ?
What's going on here to-night ?

SECOND CITIZEN

Why, it's Dr Stockmann that's going to lecture
against the Burgomaster

FOURTH CITIZEN.

But the Burgomaster's his brother

FIRST CITIZEN

That makes no difference Dr Stockmann's
not afraid of him

THIRD CITIZEN

But he's all wrong, the *People's Messenger* says
so.

SECOND CITIZEN

Yes, he must be wrong this time ; for neither
the House-owners' Association nor the Citizens'
Club would let him have a hall

FIRST CITIZEN

They wouldn't even lend him the hall at the
Baths

SECOND CITIZEN

No, you may be sure they wouldn't.

A MAN

[*In another group*] Now, who's the one to follow in this business, eh?

ANOTHER MAN.

[*In the same group*] Just keep your eye on Aslaksen, and do as he does

BILLING

[*With a portfolio under his arm, makes his way through the crowd*] Excuse me, gentlemen Will you allow me to pass? I'm here to report for the *People's Messenger* Many thanks
[*Sits by the table on the left*]

A WORKING-MAN

Who's he?

ANOTHER WORKING-MAN

Don't you know him? It's that fellow Billing, that writes for Aslaksen's paper

CAPTAIN HORSTER *enters by the door in front on the right, escorting MRS STOCKMANN and PETRA EILIF and MORTEN follow them*

HORSTER

This is where I thought you might sit; you can so easily slip out if anything should happen.

MRS STOCKMANN

Do you think there will be any disturbance?

HORSTER

One can never tell—with such a crowd But there's no occasion for anxiety

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Sitting down*] How kind it was of you to offer Stockmann this room

HORSTER.

Since no one else would, I—

PETRA

[*Who has also seated herself*] And it was brave too, Captain Horster

HORSTER

Oh, I don't see where the bravery comes in

HOVSTAD and ASLAKSEN enter at the same moment, but make their way through the crowd separately

ASLAKSEN

[*Going up to HORSTER*] Hasn't the Doctor come yet?

HORSTER

He's waiting in there

[*A movement at the door in the background*]

HOVSTAD

[*To BILLING.*] There's the Burgomaster! Look!

BILLING,

Yes, strike me dead if he hasn't put in an appearance after all!

BURGOMASTER STOCKMANN makes his way blandly through the meeting, bowing politely to both sides, and takes his stand by the wall on the left. Soon afterwards, DR STOCKMANN enters by the door on the right. He wears a black frock-coat and white necktie. Faint applause, met by a subdued hissing. Then silence.

DR STOCKMANN

[*In a low tone*] How do you feel, Katrina?

MRS STOCKMANN

Quite comfortable, thank you [*In a low voice*]
Now do keep your temper, Thomas

DR STOCKMANN

Oh, I shall keep myself well in hand [*Looks at his watch, ascends the platform, and bows*] It's a quarter past the hour, so I shall begin—
[*Takes out his MS*]

ASLAKSEN

But surely a chairman must be elected first.

DR STOCKMANN

No, that's not at all necessary

SEVERAL GENTLEMEN

[*Shouting*] Yes, yes

BURGOMASTER.

I should certainly say that a chairman ought to be elected

DR STOCKMANN

But I've called this meeting to give a lecture, Peter!

BURGOMASTER

Dr Stockmann's lecture may possibly lead to differences of opinion

SEVERAL VOICES IN THE CROWD.

A chairman! A chairman!

HOVSTAD

The general voice of the meeting seems to be for a chairman!

DR STOCKMANN

[*Controlling himself*] Very well then, let the meeting have its way

ASLAKSEN

Will not the Burgomaster take the chair?

THREE GENTLEMEN

[*Clapping*] Bravo! Bravo!

BURGOMASTER

For reasons you will easily understand, I must decline. But, fortunately, we have among us one whom I think we can all accept. I allude to the president of the House-owners' Association, Mr Aslaksen.

MANY VOICES

Yes, yes! Bravo Aslaksen! Hurrah for Aslaksen!

[*DR STOCKMANN takes his MS and descends from the platform*]

ASLAKSEN

Since my fellow citizens repose this trust in me, I cannot refuse——

[*Applause and cheers. ASLAKSEN ascends the platform*]

BILLING.

[*Writing*] So—"Mr Aslaksen was elected by acclamation——"

ASLAKSEN

And now, as I have been called to the chair, I take the liberty of saying a few brief words. I am a quiet, peace-loving man, I am in favour of discreet moderation, and of—and of moderate

discretion. Every one who knows me, knows that

MANY VOICES

Yes, yes, Aslaksen !

ASLAKSEN

I have learnt in the school of life and of experience that moderation is the virtue in which the individual citizen finds his best advantage——

BURGOMASTER.

Hear, hear !

ASLAKSEN

——and it is discretion and moderation, too, that best serve the community I could therefore suggest to our respected fellow citizen, who has called this meeting, that he should endeavour to keep within the bounds of moderation

A MAN

[*By the door*] Three cheers for the Temperance Society !

A VOICE

Go to the devil !

VOICES

Hush ! hush !

ASLAKSEN

No interruptions, gentlemen !—Does any one wish to offer any observations ?

BURGOMASTER.

Mr Chairman !

ASLAKSEN

Burgomaster Stockmann will address the meeting

BURGOMASTER

On account of my close relationship—of which you are probably aware—to the present medical officer of the Baths, I should have preferred not to speak here this evening. But my position as chairman of the Baths, and my care for the vital interests of this town, force me to move a resolution. I may doubtless assume that not a single citizen here present thinks it desirable that untrustworthy and exaggerated statements should get abroad as to the sanitary condition of the Baths and of our town.

MANY VOICES

No, no, no! Certainly not! We protest

BURGOMASTER

I therefore beg to move, "That this meeting declines to hear the proposed lecture or speech on the subject by the medical officer of the Baths."

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Flaring up*] Declines to hear——! What do you mean?

MRS. STOCKMANN

[*Coughing*] H'm! h'm!

DR. STOCKMANN.

[*Controlling himself*] So I am not to be heard?

BURGOMASTER.

In my statement in the *People's Messenger* I have made the public acquainted with the essential facts, so that all well-disposed citizens can easily form their own judgment. From that statement

it will be seen that the medical officer's proposal—besides amounting to a vote of censure upon the leading men of the town—at bottom only means saddling the ratepayers with an unnecessary outlay of at least a hundred thousand crowns

[Sounds of protest and some hussing]

ASLAKSEN

[Ringing the bell] Oider, gentlemen! I must beg leave to support the Burgomaster's resolution. I quite agree with him that there is something beneath the surface of the Doctor's agitation. In all his talk about the Baths, it is really a revolution he is aiming at, he wants to effect a redistribution of power. No one doubts the excellence of Dr Stockmann's intentions—of course there cannot be two opinions as to that. I, too, am in favour of self-government by the people, if only it doesn't cost the ratepayers too much. But in this case it would do so; and therefore I'll be hanged if—excuse me—in short, I cannot go with Dr Stockmann upon this occasion. You can buy even gold too dear, that's my opinion.

[Loud applause on all sides]

HOVSTAD

I, too, feel bound to explain my attitude. Dr Stockmann's agitation seemed at first to find favour in several quarters, and I supported it as impartially as I could. But it presently appeared that we had been misled by a false representation of the facts——

DR STOCKMANN

False——!

HOVSTAD

Well then, an untrustworthy representation.

This the Burgomaster's report has proved I trust no one here present doubts my liberal principles, the attitude of the *Messenger* on all great political questions is well known to you all. But I have learned from men of judgment and experience that in purely local matters a paper must observe a certain amount of caution.

ASLAKSEN

I entirely agree with the speaker.

HOVSTAD

And in the matter under discussion it is quite evident that Dr Stockmann has public opinion against him. But, gentlemen, what is an editor's clearest and most imperative duty? Is it not to work in harmony with his readers? Has he not in some sort received a tacit mandate to further assiduously and unweariedly the interests of his constituents? Or am I mistaken in this?

MANY VOICES

No, no, no! Hovstad is right!

HOVSTAD

It has cost me a bitter struggle to break with a man in whose house I have of late been a frequent guest—with a man who, up to this day, has enjoyed the unqualified goodwill of his fellow citizens—with a man whose only, or, at any rate, whose chief fault is that he consults his heart rather than his head.

A FEW SCATTERED VOICES.

That's true! Hurrah for Dr Stockmann!

HOVSTAD

But my duty towards the community has constrained me to break with him. Then, too, there is another consideration that impels me to oppose him, and, if possible, to block the ill-omened path upon which he is entering. consideration for his family——

DR STOCKMANN

Keep to the water-works and sewers !

HOVSTAD

——consideration for his wife and his unprotected¹ children

MORTEN.

Is that us, mother ?

MRS STOCKMANN.

Hush !

ASLAKSEN

I will now put*the Burgomaster's resolution to the vote

DR STOCKMANN

You need not. I have no intention of saying anything this evening of all the filth at the Baths. No ! You shall hear something quite different

BURGOMASTER

[*Half aloud*] What next, I wonder ?

A DRUNKEN MAN

[*At the main entrance*] I'm a ratepayer, so I've a right to my opinion¹. And it's my full, firm, incomprehensible opinion that——

¹ Literally, "unprovided-for"

SEVERAL VOICES.

Silence up there !

OTHERS

He's drunk ! 'Tain him out !

[The drunken man is turned out.]

DR STOCKMANN.

Can I speak ?

ASLAKSEN

[Ringing the bell] DR Stockmann will address the meeting

DR STOCKMANN

A few days ago, I should have liked to see any one venture upon such an attempt to gag me as has been made here to-night ! I would have fought like a lion for my sacred rights. But now I care little enough, for now I have more important things to speak of

*[The people crowd closer round him
MORTEN KIIL comes in sight among the
bystanders]*

DR STOCKMANN

[Continuing] I have been pondering a great many things during these last days—thinking such a multitude of thoughts, that at last my head was positively in a whirl——

BURGOMASTER

[Coughing] H'm—— !

DR. STOCKMANN.

But presently things seemed to straighten themselves out, and I saw them clearly in all

then bearings That is why I stand here this evening I am about to make great revelations, my fellow citizens ' I am going to announce to you a far-reaching discovery, beside which the trifling fact that our water-works are poisoned, and that our health-resort is built on pestilential ground, sinks into insignificance

MANY VOICES

[*Shouting*] Don't speak about the Baths ' We won't listen to that ' No more of that '

DR STOCKMANN

I have said I would speak of the great discovery I have made within the last few days—the discovery that all our sources of spiritual life are poisoned, and that our whole society rests upon a pestilential basis of falsehood

SEVERAL VOICES

[*In astonishment and half aloud*] What's he saying ?

BURGOMASTER

Such an insinuation——!

ASLAKSEN

[*With his hand on the bell*] I must call upon the speaker to moderate his expressions

DR STOCKMANN

I have loved my native town as dearly as any man can love the home of his childhood I was young when I left our town, and distance, homesickness and memory threw, as it were, a glamour over the place and its people

[*Some applause and cries of approval.*

DR STOCKMANN

Then for years I was imprisoned in a horrible hole, far away in the north. As I went about among the people scattered here and there over the stony wilderness, it seemed to me, many a time, that it would have been better for these poor famishing creatures to have had a cattle-doctor to attend them, instead of a man like me.

[*Murmurs in the room*]

BILLING

[*Laying down his pen*] Strike me dead if I've ever heard——!

HOVSTAD.

What an insult to an estimable peasantry!

DR STOCKMANN

Wait a moment!—I don't think any one can reproach me with forgetting my native town up there. I sat brooding like an eider duck, and what I hatched was—the plan of the Baths.

[*Applause and expressions of dissent.*]

DR STOCKMANN

And when, at last, fate ordered things so happily that I could come home again—then, fellow citizens, it seemed to me that I hadn't another desire in the world. Yes, one desire I had: an eager, constant, burning desire to be of service to my birthplace, and to its people.

BURGOMASTER

[*Gazing into vacancy*] A strange method to select——!

DR STOCKMANN.

So I went about revelling in my happy illusions

But yesterday morning—no, it was really two nights ago—my mind's eyes were opened wide, and the first thing I saw was the colossal stupidity of the authorities——

[*Noise, cries, and laughter* MRS STOCK-
MANN *coughs repeatedly*]

BURGOMASTER.

Mr Chairman !

ASLAKSEN

[*Ringng his bell*] In virtue of my position—— !

DR STOCKMANN

It's petty to catch me up on a word, Mr Aslaksen ! I only mean that I became alive to the extraordinary muddle our leading men had been guilty of, down at the Baths I cannot for the life of me abide leading men—I've seen enough of them in my time They are like goats in a young plantation they do harm at every point, they block the path of a free man wherever he turns—and I should be glad if we could exterminate them like other noxious animals——

[*Uproar in the room.*]

BURGOMASTER

Mr Chairman, are such expressions permissible ?

ASLAKSEN

[*With his hand on the bell*] Dr Stockmann——

DR STOCKMANN

I can't conceive how it is that I have only now seen through these gentry, for haven't I had a magnificent example before my eyes here every

day—my brother Peter—slow of understanding, tenacious in prejudice——

[*Laughter, noise, and whistling* MRS STOCKMANN coughs ASLAKSEN rings violently

THE DRUNKEN MAN

[*Who has come in again*] Is it me you're alluding to? Sure enough, my name's Petersen, but devil take me if——

ANGRY VOICES.

Out with that drunken man! Turn him out!
[*The man is again turned out*

BURGOMASTER

Who is that person?

A BYSTANDER

I don't know him, Burgomaster.

ANOTHER

He doesn't belong to the town.

A THIRD

I believe he's a timber-dealer from——
[*The rest is inaudible.*

ASLAKSEN

The man was evidently intoxicated—Continue, Dr Stockmann; but pray endeavour to be moderate.

DR. STOCKMANN.

Well, fellow citizens, I shall say no more about our leading men. If any one imagines, from what I have just said, that it's these gentlemen I want to make short work of to-night, he is mistaken—altogether mistaken. For I cherish the comfortable

conviction that these laggards, these relics of a decaying order of thought, are diligently cutting their own throats. They need no doctor to hasten their end. And it is not people of that sort that constitute the real danger to society, it is not they who are most active in poisoning the sources of our spiritual life and making a plague-spot of the ground beneath our feet, it is not they who are the most dangerous enemies of truth and freedom in our society.

CRIES FROM ALL SIDES

Who, then? Who is it? Name, name!

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, you may be sure I shall name them! For this is the great discovery I made yesterday [In a louder tone] The most dangerous foe to truth and freedom in our midst is the compact majority. Yes, it's the confounded, compact, liberal majority—that, and nothing else! There, I've told you.

[Immense disturbance in the room. Most of the audience are shouting, stamping, and whistling. Several elderly gentlemen exchange furtive glances and seem to be enjoying the scene. MRS STOCKMANN rises in alarm. EILIF and MORTEN advance threateningly towards the school-boys, who are making noises. ASLAKSEN rings the bell and calls for order. HOVSTAD and BILLING both speak, but nothing can be heard. At last quiet is restored.]

ASLAKSEN

I must request the speaker to withdraw his ill considered expressions.

DR STOCKMANN

Never, Mr Aslaksen ! For it's this very majority that robs me of my freedom, and wants to forbid me to speak the truth

HOVSTAD

The majority always has right on its side.

BILLING

Yes, and truth too, strike me dead !

DR STOCKMANN

The majority never has right on its side. Never I say ! That is one of the social lies that a free, thinking man is bound to rebel against. Who make up the majority in any given country ? Is it the wise men or the fools ? I think we must agree that the fools are in a terrible, overwhelming majority, all the wide world over. But how in the devil's name can it ever be right for the fools to rule over the wise men ? *[Uproar and yells]*

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, you can shout me down, but you cannot gainsay me. The majority has right—unhappily—but right it has not. It is I, and the few, the individuals, that are in the right. The minority is always right. *[Renewed uproar]*

HOVSTAD

Ha ha ! Dr Stockmann has turned aristocrat since the day before yesterday !

DR STOCKMANN

I have said that I have no words to waste on the little, narrow-chested, short-winded crew that lie in our wake. Pulsating life has nothing more

to do with them I am speaking, of the few, the individuals among us, who have made all the new, germinating truths their own. These men stand, as it were, at the outposts, so far in the van that the compact majority has not yet reached them—and there they fight for truths that are too lately born into the world's consciousness to have won over the majority.

HOVSTAD

So the Doctor's a revolutionist now !

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, by Heaven, I am, Mr Hovstad ! I am going to revolt against the lie that truth belongs exclusively to the majority. What sort of truths do the majority rally round ? Truths so stricken in years that they are sinking into decrepitude. When a truth is so old as that, gentlemen, it's in a fair way to become a lie. [*Laughter and jeers*]

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, you may believe me or not, as you please, but truths are by no means the wiry Methusalehs some people think them. A normally-constituted truth lives—let us say—as a rule, seventeen or eighteen years, at the outside twenty, very seldom more. And truths so patriarchal as that are always shockingly emaciated, yet it's not till then that the majority takes them up and recommends them to society as wholesome food. I can assure you there's not much nutriment in that sort of fare, you may take my word as a doctor for that. All these majority-truths are like last year's salt pork ; they're like rancid, mouldy ham, producing all the moral scurvy that devastates society.

ASLAKSEN

It seems to me that the honourable speaker is wandering rather far from the subject

BURGOMASTER

I beg to endorse the Chairman's remark

DR STOCKMANN

Why you're surely mad, Peter! I'm keeping as closely to my text as I possibly can, for my text is precisely this—that the masses, the majority, this devil's own compact majority—it's that, I say, that's poisoning the sources of our spiritual life, and making a plague-spot of the ground beneath our feet.

HOVSTAD

And you make this charge against the great, independent majority, just because they have the sense to accept only certain and acknowledged truths?

DR STOCKMANN

Ah, my dear Mr Hovstad, don't talk about certain truths! The truths acknowledged by the masses, the multitude, were certain truths to the vanguard in our grandfathers' days. We, the vanguard of to-day, don't acknowledge them any longer, and I don't believe there exists any other certain truth but this—that no society can live a healthy life upon truths so old and and marrowless.

HOVSTAD

But instead of all this vague talk, suppose you were to give us some specimens of these old marrowless truths that we are living upon

[Approval from several quarters.]

DR STOCKMANN

Oh, I could give you no end of samples from the rubbish-heap, but, for the present, I shall keep to one acknowledged truth, which is a hideous lie at bottom, but which Mr Hovstad, and the *Messenger*, and all adherents of the *Messenger*, live on all the same

HOVSTAD.

And that is—— ?

DR STOCKMANN

That is the doctrine you have inherited from your forefathers, and go on thoughtlessly proclaiming far and wide—the doctrine that the multitude, the vulgar herd, the masses, are the pith of the people—that they are the people—that the common man, the ignorant, undeveloped member of society, has the same right to sanction and to condemn, to counsel and to govern, as the intellectually distinguished few

BILLING

Well, now, strike me dead—— !

HOVSTAD

[*Shouting at the same time*] Citizens, please note this !

ANGRY VOICES

Ho-ho ! Aren't we the people ? Is it only the grand folks that are to govern ?

A WORKING MAN

Out with the fellow that talks like that !

OTHERS

Turn him out !

A CITIZEN

[*Shouting*] Blow your horn, Evensen
[*The deep notes of a horn are heard, whistling, and terrific noise in the room*]

DR STOCKMANN

[*When the noise has somewhat subsided*] Now do be reasonable! Can't you bear even for once in a way to hear the voice of truth? I don't ask you all to agree with me on the instant. But I certainly should have expected Mr Hovstad to back me up, as soon as he had collected himself a bit. Mr Hovstad sets up to be a freethinker——

SEVERAL VOICES

[*Subdued and wondering*] Freethinker, did he say? What? Mr Hovstad a freethinker?

HOVSTAD

[*Shouting*] Prove it, Dr Stockmann. When have I said so in print?

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Reflecting*] No, upon my soul, you're right there, you've never had the frankness to do that. Well, well, I won't put you on the rack, Mr Hovstad. Let me be the freethinker then. And now I'll make it clear to you all, and on scientific grounds too, that the *Messenger* is leading you shamefully by the nose, when it tells you that you, the masses, the crowd, are the true pith of the people. I tell you that's only a newspaper lie. The masses are nothing but the raw material that must be fashioned into a People.

[*Murmurs, laughter, and disturbance in the room.*]

DR STOCKMANN

Is it not so with all other living creatures? What a difference between a cultivated and an uncultivated breed of animals! Just look at a common barn-door hen. What meat do you get from such a skinny carcase? Not much, I can tell you! And what sort of eggs does she lay? A decent crow or raven can lay nearly as good. Then take a cultivated Spanish or Japanese hen, or take a fine pheasant or turkey—ah! then you'll see the difference! And now look at the dog, our near relation. Think first of an ordinary vulgar cur—I mean one of those wretched, ragged, plebeian mongrels that haunt the gutters, and soil the sidewalks. Then place such a mongrel by the side of a poodle-dog, descended through many generations from an aristocratic stock, who have lived on delicate food, and heard harmonious voices and music. Do you think the brain of the poodle isn't very differently developed from that of the mongrel? Yes, you may be sure it is! It's well-bred poodle-pups like this that jugglers train to perform the most marvellous tricks. A common peasant-cur could never learn anything of the sort—not if he tried till doomsday.

[Noise and laughter are heard all round.]

A CITIZEN

[Shouting.] Do you want to make dogs of us now?

ANOTHER MAN

We're not animals, Doctor!

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, on my soul, but we are animals, my good
511 We're one and all of us animals, whether we

like it or not But truly there are few enough aristocratic animals among us Oh, there's a terrible difference between poodle-men and mongrel-men And the ridiculous part of it is, that Mr Hovstad quite agrees with me so long as it's four-legged animals we're talking of——

HOVSTAD

Oh, beasts are only beasts

DR STOCKMANN

Well and good—but no sooner do I apply the law to two-legged animals, than Mr Hovstad stops short; then he daren't hold his own opinions, or think out his own thoughts, then he turns the whole principle upside down, and proclaims in the *People's Messenger* that the barn-door hen and the gutter-mongrel are precisely the finest specimens in the menagerie But that's always the way, so long as the commonness still lingers in your system, and you haven't worked your way up to spiritual distinction

HOVSTAD.

I make no pretence to any sort of distinction I come of simple peasant folk, and I am proud that my root should lie deep down among the common people, who are here being insulted.

WORKMEN.

Hurrah for Hovstad. Hurrah ! hurrah !

DR STOCKMANN.

The sort of common people I am speaking of are not found among the lower classes alone, they crawl and swarm all around us—up to the very

summits of society .Just look at your own smug, respectable Burgomaster ! Why, my brother Peter belongs as clearly to the common people as any man that walks on two legs——

[*Laughter and hisses*]

BURGOMASTER

I protest against such personalities

DR STOCKMANN

[*Imperturbably*] ——and that not because, like myself, he's descended from a good-for-nothing old pirate from Pomerania, or thereabouts—for that's our ancestry——

BURGOMASTER

An absurd tradition ! Utterly groundless

DR STOCKMANN

——but he is so because he thinks the thoughts and holds the opinions of his official superiors .Men who do that, belong, intellectually-speaking, to the common people, and that is why my distinguished brother Peter is at bottom so undistinguished,—and consequently so illiberal.

BURGOMASTER.

Mr Chairman——'

HOVSTAD

So that the distinguished people in this country are the Liberals ? That's quite a new light on the subject

[*Laughter*]

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, that is part of my new discovery .And this, too, follows . that liberality of thought is

almost precisely the same thing as morality. Therefore I say it's absolutely unpardonable of the *Messenger* to proclaim, day out, day in, the false doctrine that it's the masses, the multitude, the compact majority, that monopolise liberality and morality, —and that vice and corruption and all sorts of spiritual uncleanness ooze out of culture, as all that filth oozes down to the Baths from the Mill Dale tan-works !

[*Noise and interruptions*]

DR STOCKMANN

[*Goes on imperturbably, smiling in his eagerness*]
And yet this same *Messenger* can preach about elevating the masses and the multitude to a higher level of well-being ! Why, deuce take it, if the *Messenger's* own doctrine holds good, the elevation of the masses would simply mean hurling them straight to perdition ! But, happily, the notion that culture demoralises is nothing but an old traditional lie. No it's stupidity, poverty, the ugliness of life, that do the devil's work ! In a house that isn't aired and swept every day—my wife maintains that the floors ought to be scrubbed too, but perhaps that is going too far,—well,—in such a house, I say, within two or three years, people lose the power of thinking or acting morally. Lack of oxygen enervates the conscience. And there seems to be precious little oxygen in many and many a house in this town, since the whole compact majority is unscrupulous enough to want to found its future upon a quagmire of lies and fraud,

ASLAKSEN

I cannot allow so gross an insult to be levelled against a whole community.

A GENTLEMAN

I move that the Chairman order the speaker to sit down

EAGER VOICES

Yes, yes ' That's right ' Sit down ' Sit down '

DR STOCKMANN

[*Flaring up*] Then I shall proclaim the truth at every street corner ' I shall write to newspapers in other towns ' The whole country shall know how matters stand here '

HOVSTAD

It almost seems as if the Doctor's object were to ruin the town

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, so well do I love my native town that I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie

ASLAKSEN

That's plain speaking

[*Noise and whistling* Mrs STOCKMANN
coughs in vain, the Doctor no longer
heeds her

HOVSTAD

[*Shouting amid the tumult.*] The man who would ruin a whole community must be an enemy to his fellow citizens '

DR. STOCKMANN

[*With growing excitement*] What does it matter if a lying community is ruined ' Let it be levelled to the ground, say I ' All men who live upon a lie

ought to be exterminated like vermin! You'll end by poisoning the whole country, you'll bring it to such a pass that the whole country will deserve to perish. And if ever it comes to that, I shall say, from the bottom of my heart. Perish the country! Perish all its people!

A MAN

[*In the crowd*] Why, he talks like a regular enemy of the people!

BILLING

Strike me dead but there spoke the people's voice!

THE WHOLE ASSEMBLY

[*Shouting*] Yes! yes! yes! He's an enemy of the people! He hates his country! He hates the whole people!

ASLAKSEN

Both as a citizen of this town and as a human being, I am deeply shocked at what it has been my lot to hear to-night. Dr Stockman has unmasked himself in a manner I should never have dreamt of. I must reluctantly subscribe to the opinion just expressed by some estimable citizens, and I think we ought to formulate this opinion in a resolution. I therefore beg to move, "That this meeting declares the medical officer of the Baths, Dr Thomas Stockmann, to be an enemy of the people."

[*Thunders of applause and cheers. Many form a circle round the Doctor and hoot at him. MRS STOCKMANN and PETRA have risen. MORTEN and EILIF fight the other school-boys, who have also been hooting. Some grown-up persons separate them.*]

DR STOCKMANN.

[*To the people hooting*] Ah, fools that you are! I tell you that——

ASLAKSEN.

[*Ringing*] The Doctor is out of order in speaking. A formal vote must be taken; but out of consideration for personal feelings, it will be taken in writing and without names. Have you any blank paper, Mr Billing?

BILLING

Here's both blue and white paper——

ASLAKSEN

Capital, that will save time. Cut it up into slips. That's it. [*To the meeting*] Blue means no, white means aye. I myself will go round and collect the votes.

[*The BURGOMASTER leaves the room. ASLAKSEN and a few others go round with pieces of paper in hats*]

A GENTLEMAN

[*To HOVSTAD*] What can be the matter with the Doctor? What does it all mean?

HOVSTAD

Why, you know what a hare-brained creature he is.

ANOTHER GENTLEMAN.

[*To BILLING*] I say, you're often at his house. Have you ever noticed if the fellow drinks?

BILLING.

Strike me dead if I know what to say. The

toddy's always on the table when any one looks in

A THIRD GENTLEMAN

No, I should rather say he went off his head at times

FIRST GENTLEMAN

I wonder if there's madness in the family?

BILLING

I shouldn't be surprised

A FOURTH GENTLEMAN.

No, it's pure malice. He wants to be revenged for something or other

BILLING.

He was certainly talking about a rise in his salary the other day, but he didn't get it

ALL THE GENTLEMEN

[*Together.*] Aha! That explains everything

THE DRUNKEN MAN.

[*In the crowd*] I want a blue one, I do! And I'll have a white one too.

SEVERAL PEOPLE.

There's the tipsy man again! Turn him out.

MORTEN KIL

[*Approaching the Doctor*] Well, Stockmann, you see now what such monkey-tricks lead to?

DR. STOCKMANN.

I have done my duty.

MORTEN KIL.

What was that you said about the Mill Dale tanneries ?

DR STOCKMANN.

You heard what I said—that all the filth comes from them

MORTEN KIL

From my tannery as well ?

DR STOCKMANN

I'm sorry to say yours is the worst of all.

MORTEN KIL.

Are you going to put that in the papers, too ?

DR STOCKMANN

I can't gloze anything over.

MORTEN KIL.

This may cost you dear, Stockmann !

[*He goes out*]

A FAT GENTLEMAN

[*Goes up to HORSTER, without bowing to the ladies*]
Well, Captain, so you lend your house to enemies of the people

HORSTER

I suppose I can do as I please with my own property, Sir

THE GENTLEMAN

Then of course you can have no objection if I follow your example ?

HORSTER.

What do you mean, Sir ?

THE GENTLEMAN

You shall hear from me to-morrow

[Turns away and goes out]

PETRA.

Wasn't that the owner of your ship, Captain Horster ?

HORSTER

Yes, that was Mr Vik

ASLAKSEN

[With the voting papers in his hands, ascends the platform and rings] Gentlemen ! I have now to announce the result of the vote All the voters, with one exception——

A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

That's the tipsy man !

ASLAKSEN,

With the exception of one intoxicated person, this meeting of citizens unanimously declares the medical officer of the Baths, Dr Thomas Stockmann, to be an enemy of the people *[Cheers and applause.]* Three cheers for our fine old municipality ! *[Cheers]* Three cheers for our able and energetic Burgomaster, who has so loyally set family prejudice aside ! *[Cheers]* The meeting is dissolved *[He descends]*

BILLING.

Three cheers for the Chairman

ALL.

Hurrah for Aslaksen

DR. STOCKMANN

My hat and coat, Petra Captain, have you room for passengers to the new world ?

HORSTER

For you and yours, Doctor, we'll make room

DR. STOCKMANN

[*While PETRA helps him to put on his coat*] Good Come Katrina, come boys !

[*He gives his wife his arm.*

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*In a low voice*] Thomas, dear, let us go out by the back way.

DR STOCKMANN

No back ways, Katrina ! [*In a loud voice*] You shall hear from the enemy of the people, before he shakes the dust from his feet ! I am not so forbearing as a certain person, I don't say I forgive you, for you know not what you do

ASLAKSEN.

[*Shouts*] That is a blasphemous comparison, Dr Stockmann !

BILLING

Strike me—— ! This is more than a serious man can stand !

A COARSE VOICE

And he threatens us into the bargain !

ANGRY CRIES

Let's smash his windows ! Duck him in the fiord !

A MAN.

[*In the crowd*] Blow your horn, Evensen! Blow man, blow!

[*Horn-blowing, whistling, and wild shouting*
The DOCTOR, with his family, goes
towards the door HORSTER clears the
way for them

ALL.

[*Yelling after them as they go out*] Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people!

BILLING

Strike me dead if I'd care to drink toddy at Stockmann's to-night!

[*The people throng towards the door, the shouting is taken up by others outside, from the street are heard cries of "Enemy of the people! Enemy of the people!"*

ACT FIFTH.

DR STOCKMANN'S *Study* Bookshelves and glass cases with various collections along the walls. In the back, a door leading to the hall, in front, on the left, a door to the sitting-room. In the wall to the right are two windows, all the panes of which are smashed. In the middle of the room is the DOCTOR'S writing-table, covered with books and papers. The room is in disorder. It is forenoon.

DR STOCKMANN, in dressing-gown, slippers, and skull-cap, is bending down and raking with an umbrella under one of the cabinets, at last he rakes out a stone.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Speaking through the sitting-room doorway*] Katrina, I've found another!

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*In the sitting-room.*] Oh, I'm sure you'll find plenty more.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Placing the stone on a pile of others on the table*] I shall keep these stones as sacred relics. Elif and Morten shall see them every day, and when I die they shall be heirlooms. [*Raking under the bookcase*] Hasn't—what the devil is her name?—the girl—hasn't she been for the glazier yet?

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Coming in*] Yes, but he said he didn't know whether he would be able to come to-day.

DR STOCKMANN

I believe, if the truth were told, he daren't come

MRS STOCKMANN

Well, Randina, too, had an idea he was afraid to come, because of the neighbours [*Speaks through the sitting-room doorway*] What is it, Randina?—Very well [*Goes out, and returns immediately*] Here is a letter for you, Thomas.

DR. STOCKMANN

Let me see [*Opens the letter and reads*] Aha!

MRS STOCKMANN

Who is it from?

DR STOCKMANN

From the landlord. He gives us notice.

MRS STOCKMANN

Is it possible? He is such a nice man——

DR STOCKMANN

[*Looking at the letter.*] He daren't do otherwise, he says. He is very unwilling to do it, but he daren't do otherwise—on account of his fellow citizens—out of respect for public opinion—is in a dependent position—doesn't dare to offend certain influential men——

MRS STOCKMANN

There, you see, Thomas

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, I see well enough, they are all cowards, every one of them, in this town, no one dares do anything for fear of all the rest [*Throws the letter on the table.*] But it's all the same to us, Katrina We will shape our course for the new world, and then——

MRS STOCKMANN

But are you sure this idea of going abroad is altogether wise, Thomas?

DR. STOCKMANN

Would you have me stay here, where they have pilloried me as an enemy of the people, branded me, smashed my windows! And look here, Katrina, they've torn a hole in my black trousers, too

MRS STOCKMANN

Oh dear, and these are the best you have!

DR STOCKMANN

A man should never put on his best trousers when he goes out to battle for freedom and truth. Well, I don't care so much about the trousers; them you can always patch up for me But that the mob, the rabble, should dare to attack me as if they were my equals—that is what I can't, for the life of me, stomach!

MRS. STOCKMANN.

Yes, they have behaved abominably to you here, Thomas, but is that any reason for leaving the country altogether?

DR. STOCKMANN

Do you think the plebeians aren't just as insolent

in other towns? Oh yes, they are, my dear, it's six of one and half a dozen of the other. Well, never mind, let the curs yelp, that's not the worst, the worst is that every one, all over the country, is the slave of his party. Not that I suppose—very likely it's no better in the free West either, the compact majority, and enlightened public opinion, and all the other devil's trash is rampant there too. But you see the conditions are larger there than here, they may kill you, but they don't slow-torture you, they don't screw up a free soul in a vice, as they do at home here. And then, if need be, you can keep out of it all [*Walks up and down*]. If I only knew of any primeval forest, or a little South Sea island to be sold cheap——

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, but the boys, Thomas

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Comes to a standstill*] What an extraordinary woman you are, Katrina! Would you rather have the boys grow up in such a society as ours? Why, you could see for yourself yesterday evening that one half of the population is stark mad, and if the other half hasn't lost its wits, that's only because they are brute beasts who haven't any wits to lose

MRS STOCKMANN

But really, my dear Thomas, you do say such imprudent things

DR STOCKMANN.

What! Isn't it the truth that I tell them? Don't they turn all ideas upside down? Don't

they stir up right and wrong into one hotch-potch ? Don't they call lies everything that I know to be the truth ? But the maddest thing of all is to see crowds of grown men, calling themselves Liberals, go about persuading themselves and others that they are friends of freedom ! Did you ever hear anything like it, Katrina ?

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, yes, no doubt But——

PETRA *enters from the sitting-room.*

MRS STOCKMANN

Back from school already ?

PETRA

Yes ; I have been dismissed

MRS STOCKMANN

Dismissed ?

DR STOCKMANN

You too !

PETRA

Mrs Busk gave me notice, and so I thought it best to leave there and then

DR STOCKMANN

You did perfectly right !

MRS STOCKMANN

Who could have thought Mrs Busk was such a bad woman !

PETRA

Oh mother, Mrs Busk isn't bad at all ; I saw clearly how sorry she was But she dared not do otherwise, she said ; and so I am dismissed.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Laughing and rubbing his hands*] She dared not do otherwise—just like the rest! Oh, it's delicious

MRS STOCKMANN

Oh well, after that frightful scene last night——

PETRA

It wasn't only that What do you think, father——?

DR. STOCKMANN.

Well?

PETRA

Mrs. Busk showed me no fewer than three letters she had received this morning——

DR STOCKMANN

Anonymous, of course?

PETRA

Yes.

DR STOCKMANN

They never dare give their names, Katrina!

PETRA

And two of them stated that a gentleman who is often at our house said at the club last night that I held extremely advanced opinions upon various things——

DR STOCKMANN

Of course you didn't deny it

PETRA

Of course not. You know Mrs Busk herself is

pretty advanced in her opinions when we're alone together, but now that this has come out about me, she dared not keep me on

MRS STOCKMANN

Some one that is often at our house, too
There, you see, Thomas, what comes of all your hospitality

DR STOCKMANN

We won't live any longer in such a pig-sty '
Pack up as quickly as you can, Katrina, let's get away—the sooner the better

MRS STOCKMANN

Hush! I think there is some one in the passage See who it is, Petra

PETRA

[*Opening the door*] Oh, is it you, Captain Horster? Please come in.

HORSTER

[*From the hall*] Good morning. I thought I might just look in and ask how you are

DR STOCKMANN

[*Shaking his hand*] Thanks; that's very good of you.

MRS STOCKMANN

And thank you for helping us through the crowd last night, Captain Horster

PETRA

How did you ever get home again?

HORSTER

Oh, that was all right I am tolerably able-bodied, you know, and those fellows' bark is worse than their bite

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, isn't it extraordinary, this piggish cowardice? Come here, and let me show you something! Look, here are all the stones they threw in at us Only look at them? Upon my soul there aren't more than two decent-sized lumps in the whole heap, the rest are nothing but pebbles—mere gravel They stood down there, and yelled, and swore they'd half kill me, —but as for really doing it—no, there's mighty little fear of that in this town!

HORSTER

You may thank your stars for that this time, Doctor

DR STOCKMANN*

So I do, of course. But it's depressing all the same, for if ever it should come to a serious national struggle, you may be sure public opinion would be for taking to its heels, and the compact majority would scamper for their lives like a flock of sheep, Captain Horster That is what's so melancholy to think of; it grieves me to the heart —But deuce take it—it's foolish of me to feel anything of the sort! They have called me an enemy of the people; well then, let me be an enemy of the people!

MRS STOCKMANN.

That you'll never be, Thomas,

DR STOCKMANN

You'd better not take your oath of it, Katrina
A bad name may act like a pin-scratch in the lung
And that confounded word—I can't get rid of it,
it has sunk deep into my heart, and there it lies
gnawing and sucking like an acid. And no
magnesia can cure me

PETRA.

Pooh, you should only laugh at them, father

HORSTER

People will think differently yet, Doctor

MRS STOCKMANN

Yes, Thomas, that's as certain as that you are
standing here

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, perhaps, when it is too late Well, as they
make their bed so they must lie! Let them go
on wallowing here in their pig-sty, and learn to
repent having driven a patriot into exile When
do you sail, Captain Horster?

HORSTER

Well—that's really what I came to speak to
you about——

DR. STOCKMANN

What? Anything wrong with the ship?

HORSTER

No; but the fact is, I shan't be sailing in her

PETRA.

Surely you have not been dismissed?

HORSTER

[*Smiling*]. Yes, I have

PETRA.

You too !

MRS STOCKMANN

There, you see, Thomas

DR STOCKMANN

And for the truth's sake ! Oh, if I could possibly have imagined such a thing——

HORSTER

You mustn't be troubled about this, I shall soon find a berth with some other company, elsewhere

DR STOCKMANN.

And this is that man Vik ! A wealthy man, independent of every one ! Faugh !

HORSTER

Oh, for that matter, he's a very well-meaning man He said himself he would gladly have kept me on if only he dared——

DR. STOCKMANN

But he didn't dare ? Of course not !

HORSTER

It's not so easy, he said, when you belong to a party——

DR. STOCKMANN

My gentleman has hit it there ! A party is like a sausage-machine, it grinds all the brains together in one mash, and that's why we see nothing but porridge-heads and pulp-heads all around !

MRS STOCKMANN.

Now really, Thomas !

PETRA

[To HORSTER] If only you hadn't seen us home, perhaps it would not have come to this

HORSTER

I don't regret it

PETRA

[Gives him her hand] Thank you for that !

HORSTER

[To DR STOCKMANN] And then, too, I wanted to tell you this if you are really determined to go abroad, I've thought of another way——

DR STOCKMANN

That's good—if only we can get off quickly——

Mrs STOCKMANN.

Hush ! Isn't that a knock ?

PETRA.

I believe it is uncle.

DR STOCKMANN

Aha ! [Calls] Come in !

MRS STOCKMANN

My dear Thomas, now do promise me——

The BURGOMASTER enters from the hall

BURGOMASTER.

[In the doorway.] Oh, you are engaged. Then I'd better——

DR STOCKMANN

No no, come in

BURGOMASTER

But I wanted to speak to you alone.

MRS STOCKMANN

We can go into the sitting-room.

HORSTER.

And I shall look in again presently.

DR STOCKMANN

No no, go with the ladies, Captain Horster,
I must hear more about——

HORSTER

All right, then I'll wait

*[He follows MRS STOCKMANN and PETRA
into the sitting-room. The BURGOMASTER
says nothing, but casts glances at the
windows]*

DR STOCKMANN

I daresay you find it rather draughty here to-day? Put on your cap

BURGOMASTER.

Thanks, if I may *[Does so]* I fancy I caught cold yesterday evening I stood there shivering——

DR STOCKMANN.

Really On my soul, now, I found it quite warm enough

BURGOMASTER

I regret that it was not in my power to prevent these nocturnal excesses.

DR STOCKMANN

Have you anything else in particular to say to me?

BURGOMASTER.

[*Producing a large letter*] I have this document for you from the Directors of the Baths

DR STOCKMANN.

My dismissal?

BURGOMASTER

Yes, dated from to-day [*Places the letter on the table*] We are very sorry—but frankly, we dared not do otherwise, on account of public opinion.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Smiling*] Dared not? I've heard that phrase already to-day

BURGOMASTER

I beg you to realise your position clearly For the future, you cannot count upon any sort of practice in the town

DR STOCKMANN

Devil take the practice! But how can you be so sure of that?

BURGOMASTER

The House-owners' Association is sending round a circular from house to house, in which all well-disposed citizens are called upon not to employ you, and I dare swear that not a single head of a family will venture to refuse his signature, he simply dare not

DR STOCKMANN.

Well well; I don't doubt that But what then?

BURGOMASTER

If I might advise, I would suggest that you should leave the town for a time——

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, I've had some such idea in my mind already

BURGOMASTER

Good And when you have had six months or so for mature deliberation, if you could make up your mind to acknowledge your error, with a few words of regret——

DR STOCKMANN.

I might perhaps be reinstated, you think ?

BURGOMASTER

Perhaps it's not quite out of the question

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, but how about public opinion ? You daen't, on account of public opinion.

BURGOMASTER

Opinion is extremely variable And, to speak candidly, it is of the greatest importance for us to have such an admission under your own hand

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, I daresay it would be mightily convenient for you ! But you remember what I've said to you before about such foxes tricks !

BURGOMASTER

At that time your position was infinitely more

favourable, at that time you thought you had the whole town at your back——

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, and now I have the whole town on my back—— [*Flaring up*] But no—not if I had the devil and his dam on my back—! Never—never, I tell you!

BURGOMASTER.

The father of a family has no right¹ to act as you are doing. You have no right to do it, Thomas

DR STOCKMANN

I have no right! There's only one thing in the world that a free man has no right to do; and do you know what that is?

BURGOMASTER

No.

DR STOCKMANN

Of course not, but *I* will tell you. A free man has no right to wallow in filth like a cur, he has no right to act so that he ought to spit in his own face!

BURGOMASTER.

That sounds extremely plausible, and if there were not another explanation of your obstinacy—but we all know there is——

DR. STOCKMANN.

What do you mean by that?

¹ "Has no right" represents the Norwegian "*tor ikke*"—the phrase which, elsewhere in this scene, is translated "*dare not*". The latter rendering should perhaps have been adhered to throughout, but in this passage the Norwegian words convey a shade of meaning which is best represented by "has no right."

BURGOMASTER

You understand well enough But as your biothel, and as a man who knows the world, I warn you not to build too confidently upon piospects and expectations that may very likely come to nothing

DR STOCKMANN

Why, what on earth are you driving at?

BURGOMASTER

Do you really want me to believe that you are ignorant of the terms of old Morten K  l's will?

DR STOCKMANN

I know that the little he has is to go to a home for old and needy artizans But what has that got to do with me?

BURGOMASTER

To begin with, "the little he has" is no trifle. Morten K  l is a tolerably wealthy man

DR STOCKMANN.

I have never had the least notion of that!

BURGOMASTER

H'm—really? Then I suppose you have no notion that a not inconsiderable part of his fortune is to go to your children, you and your wife having a life-interest in it Has he not told you that?

DR. STOCKMANN.

No, I'll be hanged if he has! On the contrary, he has done nothing but grumble about being so preposterously over-taxed But are you really sure of this, Peter?

BURGOMASTER

I have it from a thoroughly trustworthy source

DR STOCKMANN

Why, good heavens, then Katrina's provided for—and the children too! Oh, I must tell her
——[*Calls*] Katrina, Katrina!

BURGOMASTER

[*Holding him back*] Hush! don't say anything about it yet

MRS STOCKMANN.

[*Opening the door.*] What is it?

DR STOCKMANN.

Nothing my dear, go in again

[*MRS STOCKMANN closes the door*]

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Pacing up and down*] Provided for! Only think—all of them provided for! And for life! After all, it's a grand thing to feel yourself secure!

BURGOMASTER

Yes, but that is just what you are not Morten Kul can revoke his will any day or hour he chooses

DR STOCKMANN

But he won't, my good Peter The Badger is only too delighted to see me fall foul of you and your wiseacre friends.

BURGOMASTER

[*Starts and looks searchingly at him*] Aha! That throws a new light on a good many things.

DR STOCKMANN

What things ?

BURGOMASTER

So the whole affair has been a carefully-concocted intrigue Your recklessly violent onslaught—in the name of truth—upon the leading men of the town——

DR. STOCKMANN

Well, what of it ?

BURGOMASTER

It was nothing but a preconcerted requital for that vindictive old Morten Køl's will.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Almost speechless*] Peter—you are the most abominable plebeian I have ever known in all my born days

BURGOMASTER.

All is over between us Your dismissal is irrevocable—for now we have a weapon against you. [He goes out]

DR STOCKMANN

Shame ! shame ! shame ! [*Calls*] Katrina ! The floor must be scrubbed after him ! Tell her to come here with a pail—what's her name ? con-found it—the girl with the smudge on her nose——

MRS STOCKMANN

[*In the sitting-room doorway*] Hush, hush Thomas !

PETRA.

[*Also in the doorway*] Father, here's grandfather: he wants to know if he can speak to you alone.

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, of course he can. [*By the door*] Come in, father-in-law

MORTEN KIIL *enters* DR STOCKMANN *closes the door behind him*

DR STOCKMANN

Well, what is it? Sit down

MORTEN KIIL

I won't sit down. [*Looking about him*] It looks cheerful here to-day, Stockmann.

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, don't you think so?

MORTEN KIIL

Sure enough And you've plenty of fresh air too, you've got your fill of that oxygen you were talking about yesterday You must have a rare good conscience to-day, I should think

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, I have

MORTEN KIIL

So I should suppose [*Tapping himself on the breast*] But do you know what I have got here?

DR. STOCKMAN.

A good conscience too, I hope.

MORTON KIIL.

Pooh! No; something far better than that.

[*Takes out a large pocket-book, opens it, and shows STOCKMANN a bundle of papers*]

DR STOCKMANN

[*Looking at him in astonishment*] Shales in the Baths !

MORTEN KIIL.

They weren't difficult to get to-day

DR STOCKMANN

And you've gone and bought these up—— ?

MORTEN KIIL

All I had the money to pay for

DR STOCKMANN.

Why, my dear sir,—just when things are in such a desperate way at the Baths——

MORTEN KIIL

If you behave like a reasonable being, you can soon set the Baths all right again.

DR STOCKMANN.

Well, you can see for yourself I'm doing all I can. But the people of this town are mad !

MORTEN KIIL

You said yesterday that the worst filth came from my tannery Now, if that's true, then my grandfather, and my father before me, and I myself, have for ever so many years been poisoning the town with filth, like three destroying angels. Do you think I'm going to sit quiet under such a reproach ?

DR. STOCKMANN

Unfortunately, you can't help it

MORTEN KIIL

No, thank you I hold fast to my good name I've heard that people call me "the Badger" A badger's a sort of a pig, I know, but I'm determined to give them the lie I will live and die a clean man

DR STOCKMANN

And how will you manage that?

MORTEN KIIL

You shall make me clean, Stockmann

DR STOCKMANN

I'

MORTEN KIIL

Do you know what money I've used to buy these shares with? No, you can't know, but now I'll tell you It's the money Katrina and Petra and the boys are to have after my death For, you see, I've laid by something after all

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Flaring up.*] And you've taken Katrina's money and done this with it!

MORTEN KIIL

Yes; the whole of it is invested in the Baths now And now I want to see if you're really so stark, staring mad, after all, Stockmann If you go on making out that these beasts and other abominations dribble down from my tannery, it'll be just as if you were to flay broad stripes of Katrina's skin—and Petra's too, and the boys'. No decent father would ever do that—unless he were a madman.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Walking up and down*] Yes, but I am a madman, I am a madman!

MORTEN KIIL

You surely can't be so raving, ramping mad where your wife and children are concerned

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Stopping in front of him*] Why couldn't you have spoken to me before you went and bought all that rubbish?

MORTEN KIIL.

What's done can't be undone.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Walking restlessly about*] If only I weren't so certain about the affair——! But I am absolutely convinced that I'm right

MORTEN KIIL.

[*Weighing the pocket-book in his hand*] If you stick to this lunacy, these aren't worth much
[*Puts the book into his pocket*]

DR STOCKMANN

But, deuce take it! surely science ought to be able to hit upon some antidote, some sort of prophylactic——

MORTEN KIIL

Do you mean something to kill the beasts?

DR STOCKMANN.

Yes, or at least to make them harmless

MORTEN KIIL

Couldn't you try ratsbane?

DR STOCKMANN.

Oh, nonsense, nonsense!—But since every one declares it's nothing but fancy, why fancy let it be! Let them have it their own way! Haven't the ignorant, narrow-hearted curs reviled me as an enemy of the people?—and weren't they on the point of tearing the clothes off my back?

MORTEN KIIL

And they've smashed all your windows for you too!

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, and then there's one's duty to one's family! I must talk that over with Katrina; such things are more in her line.

MORTEN KIIL

That's right! You just follow the advice of a sensible woman.

DR STOCKMANN

[*Turning upon him angrily*] How could you act so preposterously! Risking Katrina's money, and putting me to this horrible torture! When I look at you, I seem to see the devil himself——!

MORTEN KIIL

Then I'd better be off But I must hear from you, yes or no, by two o'clock If it's no, all the shares go to the Hospital—and that this very day.

DR STOCKMANN.

And what will Katrina get?

MORTEN KIIL

Not a rap

[*The door leading to the hall opens* HOVSTAD
and ASLAKSEN are seen outside it

MORTEN KIIL

Hullo ! look at these two

DR STOCKMANN.

[*Staring at them*] What ! Do you actually venture to come here ?

HOVSTAD.

Why, to be sure we do

ASLAKSEN

You see, we've something to discuss with you

MORTEN KIIL

[*Whispers*] Yes or no—by two o'clock.

ASLAKSEN

[*With a glance at HOVSTAD*] Aha !

[MORTEN KIIL goes out]

DR STOCKMANN

Well, what do you want with me ? Be brief.

HOVSTAD

I can quite understand that you resent our attitude at the meeting yesterday——

DR. STOCKMANN

Your attitude, you say ? Yes, it was a pretty attitude ! I call it the attitude of cowards—of old women—— Shame upon you !

HOVSTAD

Call it what you will, but we could not act otherwise

DR STOCKMANN

You daied not, I suppose? Isn't that so?

HOVSTAD

Yes, if you like to put it so.

ASLAKSEN

But why didn't you just say a word to us before-hand? The merest hint to Mr Hovstad or to me——

DR STOCKMANN

A hint? What about?

ASLAKSEN

About what was really behind it all

DR STOCKMANN

I don't in the least understand you?

ASLAKSEN

[*Nods confidentially*] Oh yes, you do, Dr Stockmann

HOVSTAD

It's no good making a mystery of it any longer

DR STOCKMANN

[*Looking from one to the other*] Why, what in the devil's name——!

ASLAKSEN

May I ask—isn't your father-in-law going about the town buying up all the Bath stock

DR. STOCKMANN.

Yes, he has been buying Bath stock to-day but——

ASLAKSEN

It would have been more prudent to let somebody else do that—some one not so closely connected with you

HOVSTAD

And then you ought not to have appeared in the matter under your own name No one need have known that the attack on the Baths came from you You should have taken me into your counsels, Dr Stockmann

DR STOCKMANN

[*Stares straight in front of him ; a light seems to break in upon him, and he says as though thunder-struck*] Is this possible ? Can such things be ?

ASLAKSEN

[*Smiling*] It's plain enough that they can But they ought to be managed delicately, you understand

HOVSTAD

And there ought to be more people in it, for the responsibility always falls more lightly when there are several to share it.

DR. STOCKMANN.

[*Calmly*] In one word, gentlemen—what is it you want ?

ASLAKSEN,

Mr. Hovstad can best——

HOVSTAD.

No, you explain, Aslaksen.

ASLAKSEN.

Well, it's this now that we know how the matter really stands, we believe we can venture to place the *People's Messenger* at your disposal

DR STOCKMANN

You can venture to now, eh? But how about public opinion? Aren't you afraid of bringing down a storm upon us?

HOVSTAD

We must manage to ride out the storm.

ASLAKSEN

And you must be ready to put about quickly, Doctor. As soon as your attack has done its work——

DR STOCKMANN

As soon as my father-in-law and I have bought up the shares at a discount, you mean?

HOVSTAD

I presume it is mainly on scientific grounds that you want to take the management of the Baths into your own hands

DR. STOCKMANN

Of course, it was on scientific grounds that I got the old Badger to stand in with me. And then we'll tinker up the water-works a little, and potter about a bit down at the beach, without its costing the town sixpence. That ought to do the business? Eh?

HOVSTAD

I think so—if you have the *Messenger* to back you up

ASLAKSEN

In a free community the press is a power, Doctor

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, indeed, and so is public opinion And you, Mr Aslaksen—I suppose you will answer for the House-owners' Association?

ASLAKSEN

Both for the House-owners' Association and the Temperance Society You may make your mind easy

DR. STOCKMANN

But, gentlemen—really I'm quite ashamed to mention such a thing—but—what return——?

HOVSTAD

Of course, we should prefer to give you our support for nothing But the *Messenger* is not very firmly established; it's not getting on as it ought to, and I should be very sorry to have to stop the paper just now, when there's so much to be done in general politics

DR. STOCKMANN.

Naturally; that would be very hard for a friend of the people like you [*Flaring up*] But I—I am an enemy of the people! [*Striding about the room*] Where's my stick? Where the devil is my stick?

Hovstad.

What do you mean ?

Aslaksen

Surely you wouldn't——

Dr. Stockmann.

[*Standing still*] And suppose I don't give you a single farthing out of all my shares ? You must remember we rich folk don't like parting with our money.

Hovstad

And you must remember that this business of the shares can be represented in two ways

Dr. Stockmann.

Yes, you are the man for that, if I don't come to the rescue of the *Messenger*, you'll manage to put a vile complexion on the affair, you'll hunt me down, I suppose—bait me—try to throttle me as a dog throttles a hare

Hovstad

That's a law of nature—every animal fights for its own subsistence

Aslaksen

And must take its food where it can find it, you know

Dr. Stockmann.

Then see if you can't find some out in the gutter ;
[*Striding about the room*] for now, by heaven ! we shall see which is the strongest animal of us three.

[*Finds his umbrella and brandishes it*] Now, look here——'

HOVSTAD

You surely don't mean to assault us !

ASLAKSEN

I say, be careful with that umbrella

DR STOCKMANN

Out at the window with you, Mr Hovstad !

HOVSTAD

[*By the hall door*] Are you utterly crazy ?

DR STOCKMANN

Out at the window, Mr Aslaksen ! Jump I tell you ! Be quick about it !

ASLAKSEN

[*Running round the writing-table*] Moderation, Doctor, I'm not at all strong, I can't stand much—— [*Screams*] Help ! help !

MRS STOCKMANN, PETRA, and HORSTER enter from sitting-room

MRS STOCKMANN

Good heavens, Thomas ! what can be the matter ?

DR STOCKMANN

[*Brandishing the umbrella*] Jump, I tell you ! Out into the gutter !

HOVSTAD

An unprovoked assault ! I call you to witness, Captain Horster. [*Rushes off through the hall*]

ASLAKSEN

[*Bewildered*] If one only knew the local situation——! ¹ [*He slinks out by the sitting-room door*]

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Holding back the DOCTOR*] Now, do restrain yourself, Thomas!

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Throwing down the umbrella*] I'll be hanged if they haven't got off after all

MRS STOCKMANN

Why, what can they have wanted with you?

DR. STOCKMANN

I'll tell you afterwards, I have other things to think of now [*Goes to the table and writes on a visiting-card*] Look here, Katina what's written here?

MRS STOCKMANN

Three big Noes, what does that mean?

DR. STOCKMANN

That I'll tell you afterwards, too [*Handing the card*] There, Petra, let smudgy-face run to the Badger's with this as fast as she can Be quick!

[*PETRA goes out through the hall with the card*]

DR. STOCKMANN.

Well, if I haven't had visits to-day from all the

¹ "De lokale forhold" — the local conditions, or the circumstances of the locality, a phrase constantly in Aslaksen's mouth in *The League of Youth*. In the present context it is about equivalent to "the lie of the land."

emissaries of the devil ! But now I'll shaipen my pen against them till it becomes a goad , I'll dip it in gall and venom , I'll hurl my inkstand stiaight at their skulls

MRS STOCKMANN

You forget we are going away, Thomas

PETRA *returns*

DR STOCKMANN.

Well ?

PETRA.

She has gone.

DR STOCKMANN

Good. Going away, do you say ? No, I'll be damned if we do , we stay where we aie, Katrina !

PETRA.

Stay !

MRS STOCKMANN.

Here in the town ?

DR. STOCKMANN

Yes, here ; the field of battle is here ; here the fight must be fought , here I will conquer ! As soon as my trousers are mended, I shall go out into the town and look for a house , we must have a roof over our heads for the winter.

HORSTER

That you can have in my house

DR STOCKMANN

Can I ?

HORSTER.

Yes, there's no difficulty about that. I have room enough, and I'm hardly ever at home myself.

MRS STOCKMANN.

Oh, how kind of you, Captain Horster.

PETRA

Thank you !

DR STOCKMANN

[*Shaking his hand*] 'Thanks, thanks' So that is off my mind And this very day I shall set to work in earnest Oh, there's no end of work to be done here, Katrina ! It's a good thing I shall have all my time at my disposal now, for you must know I've had notice from the Baths——

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Sighing*] Oh yes, I was expecting that

DR STOCKMANN

——And now they want to take away my practice as well But let them ! The poor I shall keep anyhow—those that can't pay ; and, good Lord ! it's they that need me most. But by heaven ! I'll make them listen to me, I'll preach to them in season and out of season, as the saying goes.

MRS STOCKMANN.

My dear Thomas, I should have thought you had learnt what good preaching does.

DR. STOCKMANN

You really are absurd, Katrina Am I to let

myself be beaten off the field by public opinion, and the compact majority, and all that sort of devilry? No, thank you! Besides, my point is so simple, so clear and straightforward. I only want to drive it into the heads of these cuns that the Liberals are the craftiest foes free men have to face, that party-programmes wring the necks of all young and living truths, that considerations of expediency turn justice and morality upside down, until life here becomes simply unlivable. Come, Captain Horster, don't you think I shall be able to make the people understand that?

HORSTER

Maybe; I don't know much about these things myself

DR STOCKMANN

Well, you see—this is the way of it! It's the party-leaders that must be exterminated. For a party-leader is just like a wolf, you see—like a ravening wolf, he must devour a certain number of smaller animals a year, if he's to exist at all. Just look at Hovstad and Aslaksen! How many small animals they polish off—or at least mangle and maim, so that they're fit for nothing else but to be house-owners and subscribers to the *People's Messenger*! [*Sits on the edge of the table*] Just come here, Katrina—see how bravely the sun shines to-day! And how the blessed fresh spring air blows in upon me!

MRS STOCKMANN.

Yes, if only we could live on sunshine and spring air, Thomas

DR STOCKMANN

Well, you'll have to pinch and save to eke them out—and then we shall get on all right. That's what troubles me least. No, what does trouble me is that I don't see any man free enough and high-minded enough to dare to take up my work after me.

PETRA

Oh, don't think about that, father, you have time enough before you—Why, see, there are the boys already.

EILIF and MORTEN enter from the sitting room.

MRS STOCKMANN.

Have you a holiday to-day?

MORTEN

No; but we had a fight with the other fellows in play-time——

EILIF

That's not true, it was the other fellows that fought us.

MORTEN

Yes, and then Mr Rorlund said we had better stop at home for a few days.

DR. STOCKMANN

[*Snapping his fingers and springing down from the table*] Now I have it! Now I have it, on my soul! You shall never set foot in school again!

THE BOYS.

Never go to school!

Mrs STOCKMANN.

Why, Thomas——

Dr STOCKMANN

Never, I say ! I shall teach you myself—that's to say, I won't teach you any mortal thing——

MORTEN

Hurrah !

Dr STOCKMANN

——but I shall help you to grow into free, high-minded men —Look here, you'll have to help me, Petra

PETRA

Yes, father, you may be sure I will.

Dr STOCKMANN

And we'll have our school in the room where they reviled me as an enemy of the people But we must have more pupils I must have at least a dozen boys to begin with

Mrs STOCKMANN

You'll never get them in this town.

Dr. STOCKMANN

We shall see [*To the boys*] Don't you know any street urchins—any regular ragamuffins—— ?

MORTEN.

Yes, father, I know lots !

Dr. STOCKMANN

That's all right ; bring me a few of them. I

shall experiment with the street-curs for once in a way ; there are sometimes excellent heads amongst them

MORTEN.

But what are we to do when we've grown into free and high-minded men ?

DR STOCKMANN

Drive all the wolves out to the far west, boys !
 [EILIF looks rather doubtful, MORTEN jumps
 about shouting " Hurrah ! "]

MRS STOCKMANN

If only the wolves don't drive you out, Thomas

DR. STOCKMANN

Are you quite mad, Katrina ! Drive me out !
 Now that I am the strongest man in the town ?

MRS STOCKMANN.

The strongest—now ?

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, I venture to say this . that now I am one
 of the strongest men in the whole world

MORTEN.

I say, what fun !

DR. STOCKMANN

[In a subdued voice] Hush ; you mustn't speak
 about it yet , but I have made a great discovery.

MRS. STOCKMANN.

What, another ?

DR STOCKMANN

Yes, of course ! [*Gathers them about him, and speaks confidentially*] This is what I have discovered, you see the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone

MRS STOCKMANN

[*Shakes her head, smiling*] Ah, Thomas dear——!

PETRA

[*Grasping his hands cheerily.*] Father !

THE END.

THE WILD DUCK
(1884)

CHARACTERS.

WERLE, *a merchant, manufacturer, etc.*

GREGERS WERLE, *his son*

OLD EKDAL

HALMAR EKDAL, *his son, a photographer.*

GINA EKDAL, *Hjalmar's wife*

HEDVIG, *their daughter, a girl of fourteen*

MRS. SORBY, *Werle's housekeeper*

RELLING, *a doctor.*

MOLVIK, *ex-student of theology.*

GRABERG, *Werle's bookkeeper.*

PETTERSEN, *Werle's servant*

JENSEN, *a hired waiter*

A FLABBY GENTLEMAN

A THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

A SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN

Six other gentlemen, guests at Werle's dinner-party.

Several hired waiters

*The first act passes in Werle's house, the remaining acts at
Hjalmar Ekdal's*

Pronunciation of Names Gregers Werle = Grayghers Verle,
Hjalmar Ekdal = Yalmar Aykdal, Gina = Gheena, Graberg =
Graberg; Jensen = Yensen.

THE WILD DUCK.

PLAY IN FIVE ACTS

ACT FIRST

At WERLE's house *A richly and comfortably furnished study, bookcases and upholstered furniture, a writing-table, with papers and documents, in the centre of the room, lighted lamps with green shades, giving a subdued light. At the back, open, folding-doors with curtains drawn back. Within is seen a large and handsome room, brilliantly lighted with lamps and branching candlesticks. In front, on the right (in the study), a small baize door leads into WERLE's office. On the left, in front, a fireplace with a glowing coal fire, and farther back a double door leading into the dining-room.*

WERLE's servant, PETTERSEN, in livery, and JENSEN, the hired waiter, in black, are putting the study in order. In the large room, two or three other hired waiters are moving about, arranging things and lighting more candles. From the dining-room, the hum of conversation and laughter of many voices are heard, a glass is tapped with a knife; silence follows, and a toast is proposed; shouts of "Bravo!" and then again a buzz of conversation.

PETTERSEN

[*Lights a lamp on the chimney-place and places a shade over it*] Hark to them, Jensen ' now the old man's on his legs holding a long palaver about Mrs Sorby

JENSEN

[*Pushing forward an arm-chair*] Is it true, what folks say, that they're—very good friends, eh ?

PETTERSEN

Lord knows

JENSEN

I've heard tell as he's been a lively customer in his day

PETTERSEN.

May be.

JENSEN

And he's giving this spread in honour of his son, they say

PETTERSEN

Yes. His son came home yesterday

JENSEN

This is the first time I ever heaid as Mr Werle had a son

PETTERSEN

Oh yes, he has a son, right enough But he's a fixture, as you might say, up at the Hoidal works He's never once come to town all the years I've been in service here

A WAITER.

[*In the doorway of the other room*] Pettersen, here's an old fellow wanting——

PETTERSEN

[*Mutters*] The devil—who's this now?

OLD EKDAL *appears from the right, in the inner room. He is dressed in a threadbare overcoat with a high collar, he wears woollen mittens, and carries in his hand a stick and a fur cap. Under his arm, a brown paper parcel. Dirty red-brown wig and small grey moustache.*

PETTERSEN

[*Goes towards him*] Good Lord—what do you want here?

EKDAL

[*In the doorway*] Must get into the office, Pettersen

PETTERSEN

The office was closed an hour ago, and——

* EKDAL

So they told me at the front door. But Graberg's in there still. Let me slip in this way, Pettersen, there's a good fellow. [*Points towards the back door*] It's not the first time I've come this way.

PETTERSEN.

Well, you may pass [*Opens the door*] But mind you go out again the proper way, for we've got company.

EKDAL.

I know, I know—h'm! Thanks, Pettersen, good old friend! Thanks! [*Mutters softly*] Ass!
[*He goes into the office, PETTERSEN shuts the door after him.*]

JENSEN

Is he one of the office people ?

PETTERSEN

No, he's only an outside hand that does odd jobs of copying. But he's been a tip-topper in his day, has old Ekdal.

JENSEN

You can see he's been through a lot.

PETTERSEN

Yes, he was an army officer, you know.

JENSEN.

You don't say so ?

PETTERSEN.

No mistake about it. But then he went into the timber trade or something of the sort. They say he once played Mr. Werle a very nasty trick. They were partners in the Hoidal works at the time. Oh, I know old Ekdal well, I do. Many a nip of bitters and bottle of ale we two have drunk at Madam Eriksen's.

JENSEN.

He don't look as if he'd much to stand treat with.

PETTERSEN.

Why, bless you, Jensen, it's me that stands treat. I always think there's no harm in being a bit civil to folks that have seen better days.

JENSEN

Did he go bankrupt then ?

PETTERSEN.

Worse than that He went to prison

JENSEN.

To prison !

PETTERSEN

Or perhaps it was the Penitentiary. [*Listens*]
Sh' They're leaving the table.

The dining-room door is thrown open from within, by a couple of waiters Mrs SORBY comes out conversing with two gentlemen Gradually the whole company follows, amongst them WERLE. Last come HIALMAR EKDAL and GREGER WERLE.

MRS SORBY

[*In passing, to the servant*] Tell them to serve the coffee in the music-room, Pettersen.

PETTERSEN

Very well, Madam

[*She goes with the two Gentlemen into the inner room, and thence out to the right*
PETTERSEN and JENSEN go out the same way

A FLABBY GENTLEMAN

[*To a THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN*] Whew ! What a dinner !—It was no joke to do it justice !

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

Oh, with a little good-will one can get through a lot in three hours

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN.

Yes, but afterwards, afterwards, my dear Chamberlain !

A THIRD GENTLEMAN

I hear the coffee and maraschino are to be served in the music-room

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

Bravo ! Then perhaps Mrs Sorby will play us something

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.

[*In a low voice*] I hope Mrs. Sorby mayn't play us a tune we don't like, one of these days !

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN.

Oh no, not she ! Bertha will never turn against her old friends

[*They laugh and pass into the inner room*]

WERLE

[*In a low voice, dejectedly*], I don't think anybody noticed it, Gregers

GREGERS

[*Looks at him*] Noticed what ?

WERLE

Did you not notice it either ?

GREGERS.

What do you mean ?

WERLE.

We were thirteen at table.

GREGERS

Indeed ? Were there thirteen of us ?

WERLE

[*Glances towards HIALMAR EKDAL*] Our usual party is twelve [*To the others*] This way, gentlemen !

[*WERLE and the others, all except HIALMAR and GREGERS, go out by the back, to the right.*]

HIALMAR :

[*Who has overheard the conversation*] You ought not to have invited me, Gregers

GREGERS

What ! Not ask my best and only friend to a party supposed to be in my honour—— ?

HIALMAR.

But I don't think your father likes it You see I am quite outside his circle

GREGERS

So I hear But I wanted to see you and have a talk with you, and I certainly shan't be staying long — Ah, we two old schoolfellows have drifted far apart from each other It must be sixteen or seventeen years since we met

HIALMAR

Is it so long ?

GREGERS

It is indeed. Well, how goes it with you ? You look well You have put on flesh, and grown almost stout.

HIALMAR

Well, "stout" is scarcely the word ; but I dare say I look a little more of a man than I used to.

GREGERS

Yes, you do, your outer man is in first-rate condition

HIALMAR.

[*In a tone of gloom*] Ah, but the inner man! That is a very different matter, I can tell you! Of course you know of the terrible catastrophe that has befallen me and mine since last we met.

GREGERS

[*More softly*] How are things going with your father now?

HIALMAR.

Don't let us talk of it, old fellow. Of course my poor unhappy father lives with me. He hasn't another soul in the world to care for him. But you can understand that this is a miserable subject for me—Tell me, rather, how you have been getting on up at the works.

GREGERS

I have had a delightfully lonely time of it—plenty of leisure to think and think about things. Come over here; we may as well make ourselves comfortable.

[*He seats himself in an arm-chair by the fire and draws HIALMAR down into another alongside of it*]

HIALMAR

[*Sentimentally*] After all, Gregers, I thank you for inviting me to your father's table, for I take it as a sign that you have got over your feeling against me.

GREGERS

[*Surprised*] How could you imagine I had any feeling against you ?

HIALMAR.

You had at first, you know.

GREGERS.

How at first ?

HIALMAR

After the great misfortune It was natural enough that you should Your father was within an ace of being drawn into that—well, that terrible business

GREGERS

Why should that give me any feeling against you ? Who can have put that into your head ?

HIALMAR

I know it did, Gregers, your father told me so himself.

GREGERS

[*Starts*] My father ! Oh indeed H'm — Was that why you never let me hear from you ?—not a single word.

HIALMAR.

Yes

GREGERS

Not even when you made up your mind to become a photographer ?

HIALMAR

Your father said I had better not write to you at all, about anything

GREGERS

[*Looking straight before him.*] Well well, perhaps he was right — But tell me now, Hjalmar are you pretty well satisfied with your present position ?

HJALMAR

[*With a little sigh*] Oh yes, I am, I have really no cause to complain At first, as you may guess, I felt it a little strange It was such a totally new state of things for me But of course my whole circumstances were totally changed Father's utter, irretrievable ruin,—the shame and disgrace of it, Gregers——

GREGERS

[*Affected.*] Yes, yes, I understand.

HJALMAR

I couldn't think of remaining at college; there wasn't a shilling to spare, on the contrary, there were debts—mainly to your father I believe——

GREGERS

H'm——

HJALMAR.

In short, I thought it best to break, once for all, with my old surroundings and associations It was your father that specially urged me to it; and since he interested himself so much in me——

GREGERS.

My father did ?

HJALMAR.

Yes, you surely knew that, didn't you ? Where do you suppose I found the money to learn

photography, and to furnish a studio and make a start? All that costs a pretty penny, I can tell you

GREGERS

And my father provided the money?

HIALMAR

Yes, my dear fellow, didn't you know? I understood him to say he had written to you about it

GREGERS

Not a word about his part in the business. He must have forgotten it. Our correspondence has always been purely a business one. So it was my father that——

HIALMAR.

Yes, certainly. He didn't wish it to be generally known, but he it was. And of course it was he, too, that put me in a position to marry. Don't you—don't you know about that either?

GREGERS

No, I haven't heard a word of it. [*Shakes him by the arm*] But, my dear Hialmar, I can't tell you what pleasure all this gives me—pleasure, and self-reproach. I have perhaps done my father injustice after all—in some things. This proves that he has a heart. It shows a sort of compunction——

HIALMAR.

Compunction——?

GREGERS

Yes, yes—whatever you like to call it. Oh, I can't tell you how glad I am to hear this of father

—So you are a married man, Hjalmar! That is further than I shall ever get. Well, I hope you are happy in your married life?

HJALMAR

Yes, thoroughly happy. She is as good and capable a wife as any man could wish for. And she is by no means without culture.

GREGERS.

[*Rather surprised*] No, of course not.

HJALMAR

You see, life is itself an education. Her daily intercourse with me—— And then we know one or two rather remarkable men, who come a good deal about us. I assure you, you would hardly know Gina again.

GREGERS.

Gina?

HJALMAR

Yes, had you forgotten that her name was Gina?

GREGERS.

Whose name? I haven't the slightest idea——

HJALMAR

Don't you remember that she used to be in service here?

GREGERS

[*Looks at him*] Is it Gina Hansen——?

HJALMAR

Yes, of course it is Gina Hansen.

GREGERS

——who kept house for us during the last year of my mother's illness ?

HIALMAR

Yes, exactly But, my dear friend, I'm quite sure your father told you that I was married

GREGERS

[*Who has risen*] Oh yes, he mentioned it, but not that—— [*Walking about the room*] Stay——perhaps he did——now that I think of it My father always writes such short letters [*Half seats himself on the arm of the chair*] Now, tell me, Hialmar——this is interesting——how did you come to know Gina——your wife ?

HIALMAR.

The simplest thing in the world You know Gina did not stay here long, everything was so much upset at that time, owing to your mother's illness and so forth, that Gina was not equal to it all, so she gave notice and left That was the year before your mother died—or it may have been the same year.

GREGERS

It was the same year I was up at the works then But afterwards—— ?

HIALMAR.

Well, Gina lived at home with her mother, Madam Hansen, an excellent hard-working woman, who kept a little eating-house She had a room to let too, a very nice comfortable room.

GREGERS

And I suppose you were lucky enough to secure it?

HIALMAR

Yes, in fact, it was your father that recommended it to me. So it was there, you see, that I really came to know Gina.

GREGERS

And then you got engaged?

HIALMAR

Yes. It doesn't take young people long to fall in love——, h'm——

GREGERS

[*Rises and moves about a little*] Tell me, was it after your engagement—was it then that my father—I mean was it then that you began to take up photography?

HIALMAR

Yes, precisely. I wanted to make a start, and to set up house as soon as possible, and your father and I agreed that this photography business was the readiest way. Gina thought so too. Oh, and there was another thing in its favour, by-the-bye—it happened, luckily, that Gina had learnt to retouch.

GREGERS

That chimed in marvellously.

HIALMAR.

[*Pleased, rises*] Yes, didn't it? Don't you think it was a marvellous piece of luck?

GREGERS

Oh, unquestionably My father seems to have been almost a kind of providence for you

HIALMAR

[*With emotion*] He did not forsake his old friend's son in the hour of his need For he has a heart, you see

MRS SORBY

[*Enters, arm-in-arm with WERLE.*] Nonsense, my dear Mr Werle, you mustn't stop there any longer staring at all the lights. It's very bad for you.

WERLE.

[*Lets go her arm and passes his hand over his eyes*] I daresay you are right

[*PETTERSEN and JENSEN carry round refreshment trays.*]

MRS SORBY

[*To the Guests in the other room*] This way, if you please, gentlemen Whoever wants a glass of punch must be so good as to come in here

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

[*Comes up to Mrs Sorby*] Surely, it isn't possible that you have suspended our cherished right to smoke?

MRS SORBY.

Yes No smoking here, in Mr. Werle's sanctum, Chamberlain

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.

When did you enact these stringent amendments on the cigar law, Mrs. Sorby?

MRS SORBY

After the last dinner, Chamberlain, when certain persons permitted themselves to overstep the mark

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.

And may one never overstep the mark a little bit, Madame Bertha? Not the least little bit?

MRS SORBY

Not in any respect whatsoever, M^r. Balle.

[Most of the Guests have assembled in the study, servants hand round glasses of punch.]

WERLE

[To HIALMAR, who is standing beside a table]
What are you studying so intently, Ekdal?

HIALMAR

Only an album, Mr. Werle.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.

[Who is wandering about] Ah, photographs! They are quite in your line of course.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN.

[In an arm-chair] Haven't you brought any of your own with you?

HIALMAR.

No, I haven't.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

You ought to have, it's very good for the digestion to sit and look at pictures

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

And it contributes to the entertainment, you know

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN

And all contributions are thankfully received

MRS SORBY

The Chamberlains think that when one is invited out to dinner, one ought to exert oneself a little in return, Mr Ekdal

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

Where one dines so well, that duty becomes a pleasure

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

And when it's a case of the struggle for existence, you know——

MRS SORBY.

I quite agree with you !

[They continue the conversation, with laughter and joking]

GREGERS

[Softly] You must join in, Hjalmar.

HJALMAR.

[Writhing] What am I to talk about?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

Don't you think, Mr Werle, that Tokay may be considered one of the more wholesome sorts of wine?

WERLE.

[By the fire] I can answer for the Tokay you

had to-day, at any rate, it's of one of the very finest seasons Of course you would notice that

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN.

Yes, it had a remarkably delicate flavour.

HIALMAR

[*Shyly*] Is there any difference between the seasons?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN.

[*Laughs*] Come! That's good!

WERLE

[*Smiles*] It really doesn't pay to set fine wine before you

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

Tokay is like photographs, Mr Ekdal. they both need sunshine. Am I not right?

HIALMAR

Yes, light is important no doubt.

MRS SÖRBY

And it's exactly the same with Chamberlains—they, too, depend very much on sunshine,¹ as the saying is.

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

Oh fie! That's a very threadbare sarcasm!

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN.

Mrs Sörby is coming out——

¹ The "sunshine" of Court favour.

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

——and at our expense, too [*Holds up his finger reprovingly*] Oh, Madame Bertha, Madame Bertha!

MRS SORBY

Yes, and there's not the least doubt that the seasons differ greatly. The old vintages are the finest

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN

Do you reckon me among the old vintages?

MRS SORBY

Oh, far from it

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

There now! But me, dear Mrs Sorby——?

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

Yes, and me? What vintage should you say that we belong to?

MRS SORBY

Why, to the sweet vintages, gentlemen

[*She sips a glass of punch The gentlemen laugh and flirt with her*]

WERLE

Mrs Sorby can always find a loop-hole—when she wants to Fill your glasses, gentlemen! Pettersen, will you see to it——! Gregers, suppose we have a glass together [*GREGERS does not move*] Won't you join us, Ekdal? I found no opportunity of drinking with you at table

[*GRABERG, the Bookkeeper, looks in at the back door.*]

GRÅBERG

Excuse me, sir, but I can't get out.

WERLE

Have you been locked in again?

GRÅBERG

Yes, and Flakstad has carried off the keys.

WERLE

Well, you can pass out this way.

GRÅBERG

But there's some one else——

WERLE

All right, come through, both of you Don't be afraid.

[GRÅBERG and OLD EKDAL come out of the office]

WERLE

[Involuntarily] Ugh!

[The laughter and talk among the Guests cease HIALMAR starts at the sight of his father, puts down his glass, and turns towards the fireplace]

EKDAL

[Does not look up, but makes little bows to both sides as he passes, murmuring] Beg pardon, come the wrong way Door locked—door locked Beg pardon

[He and GRÅBERG go out by the back, to the right.]

WERLE

[*Between his teeth*] That idiot Gråberg !

GREGERS

[*Open-mouthed and staring, to HIALMAR.*] Why surely that wasn't——'

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

What's the matter? Who was it?

GREGERS

Oh, nobody, only the bookkeeper and some one with him

THE SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN.

[*To HIALMAR.*] Did you know that man?

HIALMAR

I don't know—I didn't notice——

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

What the deuce has come over every one?

[*He joins another group who are talking softly*]

MRS SORBY

[*Whispers to the Servant*] Give him something to take with him, —something good, mind

PETTERSEN.

[*Nods*] I'll see to it.

[*Goes out.*]

GREGERS.

[*Softly and with emotion, to HIALMAR.*] So that was really he!

HIALMAR.

Yes

GREGERS

And you could stand there and deny that you knew him !

HIALMAR

[*Whispers vehemently*] But how could I——!

GREGERS

—— acknowledge your own father ?

HIALMAR

[*With pain*] Oh, if you were in my place——
[*The conversation amongst the Guests, which has been carried on in a low tone, now smells into constrained joviality*]

THE THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN

[*Approaching HIALMAR and GREGERS in a friendly manner*] Aha ! Reviving old college memories, eh ? Don't you smoke, Mr Ekdal ? May I give you a light ? Oh, by-the-bye, we mustn't——

HIALMAR.

No, thank you, I won't——

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

Haven't you a nice little poem you could recite to us, Mr Ekdal ? You used to recite so charmingly

HIALMAR

I am sorry I can't remember anything

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

Oh, that's a pity Well, what shall we do,
Balle?

*[Both Gentlemen move away and pass into
the other room]*

HIALMAR

[Gloomily] Giegers—I am going! When a
man has felt the crushing hand of Fate, you see
—— Say good-bye to your father for me

GREGERS

Yes, yes Are you going straight home?

HIALMAR.

Yes Why?

GREGERS

Oh, because I may perhaps look in on you
later

HIALMAR

No, you mustn't do that You must not come
to my home Mine is a melancholy abode,
Giegers, especially after a splendid banquet
like this We can always arrange to meet
somewhere in the town.

MRS SORBY.

[Who has quietly approached.] Are you going,
Ekdal?

HIALMAR

Yes

MRS SORBY.

Remember me to Gina.

HIALMAR.

Thanks.

MRS SORBY

And say I am coming up to see her one of these days.

HIALMAR

Yes, thank you [To GREGERS] Stay here, I will slip out unobserved

[He saunters away, then into the other room, and so out to the right]

MRS SORBY

[Softly to the Servant, who has come back] Well, did you give the old man something?

PETTERSEN

Yes; I sent him off with a bottle of cognac

MRS SORBY

Oh, you might have thought of something better than that

PETTERSEN

Oh no, Mrs Sorby, cognac is what he likes best in the world

THE FLABBY GENTLEMAN

[In the doorway with a sheet of music in his hand]

Shall we play a duet, Mrs Sorby?

MRS SORBY.

Yes, suppose we do

THE GUESTS.

Bravo, bravo!

[She goes with all the Guests through the back room, out to the right.] GREGERS

remains standing by the fire WERLE *is looking for something on the writing-table, and appears to wish that GREGERS would go, as GREGERS does not move, Werle goes towards the door*

GREGERS

Father, won't you stay a moment ?

WERLE

[*Stops*] What is it ?

GREGERS

I must have a word with you.

WERLE

Can it not wait till we are alone ?

GREGERS

No, it cannot, for perhaps we shall never be alone together

WERLE

[*Drawing nearer*] What do you mean by that ?
[*During what follows, the pianoforte is faintly heard from the distant music-room*]

GREGERS

How has that family been allowed to go so miserably to the wall ?

WERLE.

You mean the Ekdals, I suppose.

GREGERS.

Yes, I mean the Ekdals Lieutenant Ekdal was once so closely associated with you.

WERLE

Much too closely, I have felt that to my cost for many a year. It is thanks to him that I—yes I—have had a kind of slur cast upon my reputation.

GREGERS

[*Softly*] Are you sure that he alone was to blame?

WERLE

Who else do you suppose——?

GREGERS

You and he acted together in that affair of the forests——

WERLE

But was it not Ekdal that drew the map of the tracts we had bought—that fraudulent map? It was he who felled all that timber illegally on Government ground. In fact, the whole management was in his hands. I was quite in the dark as to what Lieutenant Ekdal was doing.

GREGERS

Lieutenant Ekdal himself seems to have been very much in the dark as to what he was doing.

WERLE

That may be. But the fact remains that he was found guilty and I acquitted.

GREGERS

Yes, I know that nothing was proved against you.

WERLE

Acquittal is acquittal. Why do you rake up these

old miseries that turned my hair grey before its time? Is that the sort of thing you have been brooding over up there, all these years? I can assure you, Gregers, here in the town the whole story has been forgotten long ago—so far as I am concerned

GREGERS

. But that unhappy Ekdal family

WERLE

What would you have had me do for the people? When Ekdal came out of prison he was a broken-down being, past all help. There are people in the world who dive to the bottom the moment they get a couple of slugs in their body, and never come to the surface again. You may take my word for it, Gregers, I have done all I could without positively laying myself open to all sorts of suspicion and gossip—

GREGERS.

Suspicion——? Oh, I see.

WERLE

I have given Ekdal copying to do for the office, and I pay him far, far more for it than his work is worth——

GREGERS.

[*Without looking at him*] H'm; that I don't doubt.

WERLE

You laugh? Do you think I am not telling you the truth. Well, I certainly can't refer you to my books, for I never enter payments of that sort.

GREGERS

[*Smiles coldly*] No, there are certain payments it is best to keep no account of

WERLE

[*Taken aback*] What do you mean by that ?

GREGERS

[*Mustering up courage*] Have you entered what it cost you to have Hjalmar Ekdal taught protography ?

WERLE

I ? How "entered" it ?

GREGERS

I have learnt that it was you who paid for his training And I have learnt, too, that it was you who enabled him to set up house so comfortably

WERLE

Well, and yet you talk as though I had done nothing for the Ekdals ! I can assure you these people have cost me enough in all conscience.

GREGERS

Have you entered any of these expenses in your books ?

WERLE

Why do you ask ?

GREGERS

Oh, I have my reasons Now tell me. when you interested yourself so warmly in your old friend's son—it was just before his marriage, was it not ?

WERLE

Why, deuce take it—after all these years, how can I——?

GREGERS

You wrote me a letter about that time—a business letter, of course, and in a postscript you mentioned—quite briefly—that Hjalmar Ekdal had married a Miss Hansen

WERLE

Yes, that was quite right That was her name

GREGERS

But you did not mention that this Miss Hansen was Gina Hansen—our former housekeeper

WERLE

[*With a forced laugh of derision*] No, to tell the truth, it didn't occur to me that you were so particularly interested in our former housekeeper.

GREGERS

No more I was But [*lowers his voice*] there were others in this house who were particularly interested in her

WERLE

What do you mean by that? [*Flaring up*] You are not alluding to me, I hope?

GREGERS

[*Softly but firmly*] Yes, I am alluding to you.

WERLE

And you dare—— ' You presume to—— ' How can that ungrateful hound—that photographer fellow—how dare he go making such insinuations!

GREGERS

Hjalmar has never breathed a word about this I don't believe he has the faintest suspicion of such a thing

WERLE

Then where have you got it from? Who can have put such notions in your head?

GREGERS

My poor unhappy mother told me; and that the very last time I saw her

WERLE.

Your mother! I might have known as much! You and she—you always held together. It was she who turned you against me, from the first.

GREGERS

No, it was all that she had to suffer and submit to, until she broke down and came to such a pitiful end.

WERLE

Oh, she had nothing to suffer or submit to, not more than most people, at all events. But there's no getting on with morbid, overstrained creatures—that I have learnt to my cost—And you could go on nursing such a suspicion—burrowing into all sorts of old rumours and slanders against your own father! I must say, Gregers, I really think that at your age you might find something more useful to do.

GREGERS.

Yes, it is high time

WERLE

Then perhaps your mind would be easier than it

seems to be now. What can be your object in remaining up at the works, year out and year in, diudging away like a common clerk, and not drawing a farthing more than the ordinary monthly wage? It is downright folly.

GREGERS

Ah, if I were only sure of that

WERLE

I understand you well enough. You want to be independent, you won't be beholden to me for anything. Well, now there happens to be an opportunity for you to become independent, your own master in everything.

GREGERS

Indeed? In what way——?

WERLE

When I wrote you insisting on your coming to town at once—h'm——

GREGERS

Yes, what is it you really want of me? I have been waiting all day to know.

WERLE.

I want to propose that you should enter the firm, as partner.

GREGERS

I. Join your firm? As partner?

WERLE.

Yes. It would not involve our being constantly

together You could take over the business here in town, and I should move up to the works.

GREGERS

You would?

WERLE

The fact is, I am not so fit for work as I once was I am obliged to spare my eyes, Gregers, they have begun to trouble me.

GREGERS

They have always been weak.

WERLE

Not as they are now And besides, circumstances might possibly make it desuabable for me to live up there—for a time, at any rate.

GREGERS

That is certainly quite a new idea to me.

WERLE

Listen, Gregers there are many things that stand between us ; but we are father and son after all We ought surely to be able to come to some sort of understanding with each other

GREGERS.

Outwardly, you mean, of course ?

WERLE

Well, even that would be something Think it over, Gregers. Don't you think it ought to be possible ? Eh ?

GREGERS

[*Looking at him coldly*] There is something behind all this.

WERLE

How so?

GREGERS

You want to make use of me in some way

WERLE

In such a close relationship as ours, the one can always be useful to the other

GREGERS.

Yes, so people say.

WERLE.

I want very much to have you at home with me for a time I am a lonely man Gregers, I have always felt lonely, all my life through, but most of all now that I am getting up in years I feel the need of some one about me——

GREGERS

You have Mrs. Sorby

WERLE

Yes, I have her; and she has become, I may say, almost indispensable to me She is lively and even-tempered, she brightens up the house; and that is a very great thing for me

GREGERS

Well then, you have everything just as you wish it.

WERLE

Yes, but I am afraid it can't last. A woman so situated may easily find herself in a false position, in the eyes of the world. For that matter it does a man no good, either

GREGERS

Oh, when a man gives such dinners as you give, he can risk a great deal

WERLE

Yes, but how about the woman, Gregers? I fear she won't accept the situation much longer; and even if she did—even if, out of attachment to me, she were to take her chance of gossip and scandal and all that——? Do you think, Gregers—you with your strong sense of justice——

GREGERS

[*Interrupts him*] Tell me in one word are you thinking of marrying her?

WERLE

Suppose I were thinking of it? What then?

GREGERS

That's what I say. what then?

WERLE

Should you be inflexibly opposed to it?

GREGERS

Not at all Not by any means.

WERLE

I was not sure whether your devotion to your mother's memory——

GREGERS.

I am not overstrained

WERLE

Well, whatever you may or may not be, at all events you have lifted a great weight from my mind. I am extremely pleased that I can reckon on your concurrence in this matter

GREGERS

[*Looking intently at him*] Now I see the use you want to put me to

WERLE

Use to put you to? What an expression!

GREGERS.

Oh, don't let us be nice in our choice of words—not when we are alone together, at any rate [*With a short laugh*] Well well! So this is what made it absolutely essential that I should come to town in person. For the sake of Mrs Sorby, we are to get up a pretence at family life in the house—a tableau of filial affection! That will be something new indeed

WERLE

How dare you speak in that tone!

GREGERS

Was there ever any family life here? Never since I can remember. But now, forsooth, your plans demand something of the sort. No doubt it will have an excellent effect when it is reported that the son has hastened home, on the wings of filial piety, to the grey-haired father's wedding-feast. What will then remain of all the rumours

as to the wrongs the poor dead mother had to submit to? Not a vestige. Her son annihilates them at one stroke

WERLE

Gregers—I believe there is no one in the world you detest as you do me

GREGERS

[*Softly*] I have seen you at too close quarters.

WERLE

You have seen me with your mother's eyes [*Lowers his voice a little*] But you should remember that her eyes were—clouded now and then

GREGERS

[*Quivering*] I see what you are hunting at But who was to blame for mother's unfortunate weakness? Why you! and all those——! The last of them was this woman that you palmed off upon Hjalmar Ekdal, when you were—— Ugh!

WERLE

[*Shrugs his shoulders*] Word for word as if it were your mother speaking!

GREGERS

[*Without heeding*] And there he is now, with his great, confiding, childlike mind, compassed about with all this treachery—living under the same roof with such a creature, and never dreaming that what he calls his home is built upon a lie! [*Comes a step nearer*] When I look back upon your past, I seem to see a battle-field with shattered lives on every hand.

WERLE

I begin to think the chasm that divides us is too wide

GREGERS

[*Bowing, with self-command*] So I have observed, and therefore I take my hat and go

WERLE

You are going! Out of the house?

GREGERS

Yes For at last I see my mission in life.

WERLE

What mission?

GREGERS

You would only laugh if I told you

WERLE

A lonely man doesn't laugh so easily, Gregers

GREGERS

[*Pointing towards the background*] Look, father, —the Chamberlains are playing blind-man's-buff with Mrs. Sorby —Good-night and good-bye

[*He goes out by the back to the right*
Sounds of laughter and merriment from the Company, who are now visible in the outer room]

WERLE

[*Muttering contemptuously after GREGERS*] Ha ——— ' Poor wretch—and he says he is not overstrained!

ACT SECOND.

HIALMAR EKDAL'S studio, a good-sized room, evidently in the top storey of the building. On the right, a sloping roof of large panes of glass, half-covered by a blue curtain. In the right-hand corner, at the back, the entrance door, farther forward, on the same side, a door leading to the sitting-room. Two doors on the opposite side, and between them an iron stove. At the back, a wide double sliding-door. The studio is plainly but comfortably fitted up and furnished. Between the doors on the right, standing out a little from the wall, a sofa with a table and some chairs, on the table a lighted lamp with a shade, beside the stove an old arm-chair. Photographic instruments and apparatus of different kinds lying about the room. Against the back wall, to the left of the double door, stands a bookcase containing a few books, boxes, and bottles of chemicals, instruments, tools, and other objects. Photographs and small articles, such as camel's-hair pencils, paper, and so forth, lie on the table.

GINA EKDAL sits on a chair by the table, sewing.
HEDVIG is sitting on the sofa, with her hands shading her eyes and her thumbs in her ears, reading a book.

GINA.

[Glances once or twice at **HEDVIG**, as if with secret anxiety, then says.] Hedvig!

HEDVIG

[*Does not hear*]

GINA

[*Repeats more loudly*] Hedvig!

HEDVIG

[*Takes away her hands and looks up.*] Yes, mother?

GINA

Hedvig dear, you mustn't sit reading any longer now

HEDVIG

Oh mother, mayn't I read a little more? Just a little bit?

GINA

No no, you must put away your book now. Father doesn't like it, he never reads himself in the evening

HEDVIG

[*Shuts the book*] No, father doesn't care much about reading

GINA

[*Puts aside her sewing and takes up a lead pencil and a little account-book from the table*] Can you remember how much we paid for the butter to-day?

HEDVIG

It was one crown sixty-five

GINA

That's right [*Puts it down*] It's terrible what a lot of butter we get through in this house. Then there was the smoked sausage, and the cheese—let me see—[*Writes*—and the ham—[*Adds up.*] Yes, that makes just—

HEDVIG.

And then the bee!

GINA

Yes, to be sure [Writes] How it do mount
up! But we can't manage with no less.

HEDVIG

And then you and I didn't need anything hot
for dinner, as father was out

GINA

No, that was so much to the good And then
I took eight crowns fifty for the photographs

HEDVIG

Really! So much as that?

GINA

Exactly eight crowns fifty

[Silence GINA takes up her sewing again,
HEDVIG takes paper and pencil and begins
to draw, shading her eyes with her left
hand

HEDVIG

Isn't it jolly to think that father is at Mr. Werle's
big dinner-party?

GINA

You know he's not really Mr. Werle's guest.
It was the son invited him [After a pause] We
have nothing to do with that Mr. Werle.

HEDVIG

I'm longing for father to come home He pro-
mised to ask Mrs. Sorby for something nice for me.

GINA

Yes, there's plenty of good things going in that house, I can tell you

HEDVIG

[*Goes on drawing*] And I believe I'm a little hungry too

[*OLD EKDAL, with the paper parcel under his arm and another parcel in his coat pocket, comes in by the entrance door*

GINA

How late you are to-day, grandfather!

EKDAL

They had locked the office door Had to wait in Gråberg's room And then they let me through—h'm

HEDVIG

Did you get some more copying to do, grandfather?

EKDAL.

This whole packet Just look.

GINA.

That's capital

HEDVIG.

And you have another parcel in your pocket.

EKDAL.

Eh? Oh never mind, that's nothing [*Puts his stick away in a corner*] This work will keep me going a long time, Gina [*Opens one of the sliding-doors in the back wall a little*] Hush! [*Peeps into the room for a moment, then pushes the door carefully to again*]

Hee-hee ! They're fast asleep, all the lot of them
And she's gone into the basket herself Hee-hee !

HEDVIG

Are you sure she isn't cold in that basket, grandfather ?

EKDAL

Not a bit of it ! Cold ? With all that straw ?
[*Goes towards the farther door on the left*] There are
matches in here, I suppose

GINA

The matches is on the drawers.

[*EKDAL goes into his room.*

HEDVIG.

It's nice that grandfather has got all that
copying

GINA.

Yes, poor old father, it means a bit of pocket-
money for him

HEDVIG

And he won't be able to sit the whole forenoon
down at that horrid Madam Eriksen's

GINA

No more he won't.

[*Short silence.*

HEDVIG

Do you suppose they are still at the dinner-
table ?

GINA

Goodness knows, as like as not.

HEDVIG.

Think of all the delicious things father is having

to eat! I'm certain he'll be in splendid spirits when he comes. Don't you think so, mother?

GINA.

Yes, and if only we could tell him that we'd got the room let——

HEDVIG

But we don't need that this evening

GINA

Oh, we'd be none the worse of it, I can tell you. It's no use to us as it is.

HEDVIG

I mean we don't need it this evening, for father will be in a good humour at any rate. It is best to keep the letting of the room for another time.

GINA

[*Looks across at her*] You like having some good news to tell father when he comes home in the evening?

HEDVIG

Yes; for then things are pleasanter somehow.

GINA

[*Thinking to herself*.] Yes, yes, there's something in that

[*OLD EKDAL comes in again and is going out by the foremost door to the left*]

GINA

[*Half turning in her chair*] Do you want something out of the kitchen, grandfather?

EKDAL

Yes, yes, I do. Don't you trouble. [*Goes out*]

GINA

He's not poking away at the fire, is he? [*Waits a moment*] Hedvig, go and see what he's about
[*EKDAL comes in again with a small jug of steaming hot water*]

HEDVIG

Have you been getting some hot water, grandfather?

EKDAL

Yes, hot water. Want it for something? Want to write, and the ink has got as thick as porridge.—h'm

GINA

But you'd best have your supper, first, grandfather. It's laid in there.

EKDAL

Can't be bothered with supper, Gina. Very busy, I tell you. No one's to come to my room. No one—h'm

[*He goes into his room, GINA and HEDVIG look at each other*]

GINA

[*Softly*] Can you imagine where he's got money from?

HEDVIG

From Gråberg, perhaps

GINA

Not a bit of it. Gråberg always sends the money to me.

HEDVIG

Then he must have got a bottle on credit somewhere.

GINA

Poor grandfather, who'd give him credit ?

HIALMAR EKDAL, *in an overcoat and grey felt hat,
comes in from the right.*

GINA

[*Throws down her sewing and rises.*] Why,
Ekdal Is that you already ?

HEDVIG

[*At the same time jumping up.*] Fancy your coming
so soon, father !

HIALMAR.

[*Taking off his hat.*] Yes, most of the people
were coming away

HEDVIG

So early ?

HIALMAR.

Yes, it was a dinner-party, you know

[*Is taking off his overcoat*

GINA

Let me help you

HEDVIG

Me too

[*They draw off his coat, GINA hangs it up
on the back wall*

HEDVIG

Were there many people there, father ?

HIALMAR

Oh no, not many We were about twelve or
fourteen at table

GINA

And you had some talk with them all ?

HIALMAR

Oh yes, a little , but Gregers took me up most of the time

GINA

Is Gregers as ugly as ever ?

HIALMAR

Well, he's not very much to look at. Hasn't the old man come home ?

HEDVIG

Yes, grandfather is in his room, writing

HIALMAR.

Did he say anything ?

GINA.

No, what should he say ?

HIALMAR

Didn't he say anything about—— ? I heard something about his having been with Gråberg I'll go in and see him for a moment

GINA.

No, no, better not.

HIALMAR

Why not ? Did he say he didn't want me to go in ?

GINA.

I don't think he wants to see nobody this evening——

HEDVIG

[*Making signs*] H'm—h'm'

GINA

[*Not noticing*] —he has been in to fetch hot water——

HIALMAR.

Aha ' Then he's——

GINA.

Yes, I suppose so.

HIALMAR

Oh God ' my poor old white-haired father '—
Well, well , there let him sit and get all the enjoyment he can

[*OLD EKDAL, in an indoor coat and with a lighted pipe, comes from his room*

EKDAL.

Got home? Thought it was you I heard talking

HIALMAR.

Yes, I have just come

EKDAL

You didn't see me, did you ?

HIALMAR.

No, but they told me you had passed through—so I thought I would follow you

EKDAL

H'm, good of you, Hialmar.—Who were they, all those fellows?

HIALMAR

Oh, all sorts of people There was Chamber-

lain Flor. and Chamberlain Balle, and Chamberlain Kaspisen, and Chamberlain—this, that, and the other—I don't know who all—

EKDAL

[*Nodding*] Hear that, Gina! Chamberlains every one of them!

GINA

Yes, I hear as they're terrible genteel in that house nowadays

HEDVIG

Did the Chamberlains sing, father? Or did they read aloud?

HALMAR

No, they only talked nonsense. They wanted me to recite something for them, but I knew better than that.

EKDAL

You weren't to be persuaded, eh?

GINA

Oh, you might have done it.

HALMAR.

No; one mustn't be at everybody's beck and call [*Walks about the room*] That's not my way, at any rate.

EKDAL

No no, Hjalmar's not to be had for the asking, he isn't.

HALMAR

I don't see why *I* should bother myself to entertain people on the rare occasions when I go into society. Let the others exert themselves.

These fellows go from one great dinner-table to the next and gorge and guzzle day out and day in. It's for them to bestir themselves and do something in return for all the good feeding they get

GINA

But you didn't say that ?

HIALMAR

[*Humming*] Ho ho ho——, faith, I gave them a bit of my mind

EKDAL

Not the Chamberlains ?

HIALMAR

Oh, why not ? [*Lightly*] After that, we had a little discussion about Tokay

EKDAL

Tokay ! There's a fine wine for you !

HIALMAR

[*Comes to a standstill*] It may be a fine wine. But of course you know the vintages differ ; it all depends on how much sunshine the grapes have had

GINA

Why, you know everything, Ekdal

EKDAL

And did they dispute that ?

HIALMAR.

They tried to ; but they were requested to observe that it was just the same with Chamber-

lains—that with them, too, different batches were of different qualities.

GINA

What things you do think of!

EKDAL.

Hee-hee! So they got that in their pipes too?

HIALMAR.

Right in their teeth

EKDAL

Do you hear that, Gina? He said it right in the very teeth of all the Chamberlains.

GINA

Fancy——! Right in their teeth!

HIALMAR.

Yes, but I don't want it talked about One doesn't speak of such things The whole affair passed off quite amicably of course They were nice, genial fellows, I didn't want to wound them—not I!

EKDAL

Right in their teeth, though——!

HEDVIG

[*Caressingly*] How nice it is to see you in a dress-coat! It suits you so well, father.

HIALMAR.

Yes, don't you think so? And this one really sits to perfection. It fits almost as if it had been made for me;—a little tight in the arm-holes perhaps;—help me, Hedvig [*Takes off the coat*]

I think I'll put on my jacket Where is my jacket,
Gina ?

GINA

Here it is [*Brings the jacket and helps him.*]

HIALMAR

That's it ! Don't forget to send the coat back
to Molvik first thing to-morrow morning.

GINA

[*Laying it away*] I'll be sure and see to it.

HIALMAR

[*Stretching himself*] After all, there's a more
homely feeling about this A free-and-easy in-
door costume suits my whole personality better.
Don't you think so, Hedvig ?

HEDVIG.

Yes, father.

HIALMAR.

When I loosen my necktie into a pair of flowing
ends—like this—eh ?

HEDVIG.

Yes, that goes so well with your moustache and
the sweep of your curls

HIALMAR

I should not call them curls exactly, I should
rather say locks

HEDVIG.

Yes, they are two big for curls.

HIALMAR

Locks describes them better.

HEDVIG

[*After a pause, twitching his jacket*] Father.

HIALMAR

Well, what is it?

HEDVIG.

Oh, you know very well

HIALMAR.

No, really I don't—

HEDVIG

[*Half laughing, half whimpering*] Oh yes, father, now don't tease me any longer!

HIALMAR

Why, what do you mean?

HEDVIG.

[*Shaking him*] Oh what nonsense; come, where are they, father? All the good things you promised me, you know?

HIALMAR.

Oh—if I haven't forgotten all about them!

HEDVIG

Now you're only teasing me, father! Oh, it's too bad of you! Where have you put them?

HIALMAR.

No, I positively forgot to get anything. But wait a little! I have something else for you, Hedvig

[*Goes and searches in the pockets of the coat.*]

HEDVIG

[*Slipping and clapping her hands*] Oh mother, mother!

GINA

There, you see; if you only give him time——

HIALMAR.

[*With a paper*] Look, here it is.

HEDVIG.

That? Why, that's only a paper.

HIALMAR

That is the bill of fare, my dear, the whole bill of fare. Here you see "Menu"—that means bill of fare.

HEDVIG

Haven't you anything else?

HIALMAR

I forgot the other things, I tell you. But you may take my word for it, these dainties are very unsatisfying. Sit down at the table and read the bill of fare, and then I'll describe to you how the dishes taste. Here you are, Hedvig.

HEDVIG.

[*Gulping down her tears*] Thank you.

[*She seats herself, but does not read; GINA makes signs to her, HIALMAR notices it.*]

HIALMAR.

[*Pacing up and down the room.*] It's monstrous what absurd things the father of a family is expected to think of; and if he forgets the smallest

trifle, he is treated to sour faces at once. Well, well, one gets used to that too [*Stops near the stove, by the old man's chair*] Have you peeped in there this evening, father?

EKDAL

Yes, to be sure I have. She's gone into the basket

HIALMAR

Ah, she has gone into the basket. Then she's beginning to get used to it

EKDAL

Yes; just as I prophesied. But you know there are still a few little things—

HIALMAR.

A few improvements, yes.

EKDAL

They've got to be made, you know.

HIALMAR

Yes, let us have a talk about the improvements, father. Come, let us sit on the sofa

EKDAL

All right. H'm—think I'll just fill my pipe first. Must clean it out, too. H'm
[*He goes into his room.*]

GINA

[*Smiling to HIALMAR*] His pipe!

HIALMAR

Oh yes yes, Gina; let him alone—the poor

shipwrecked old man —Yes, these improvements
—we had better get them out of hand to-morrow

GINA

You'll hardly have time to-morrow, Ekdal.

HEDVIG

[*Interposing*] Oh yes he will, mother!

GINA

—for I remember them prints that has to be
retouched, they've sent for them time after time

HIALMAR.

There now! those prints again! I shall get
them finished all right! Have any new orders
come in?

GINA

No, worse luck; to-morrow I have nothing but
those two sittings, you know.

HIALMAR

Nothing else? Oh no, if people won't set about
things with a will——

GINA

But what more can I do? Don't I advertise in
the papers as much as we can afford?

HIALMAR

Yes, the papers, the papers; you see how much
good they do. And I suppose no one has been to
look at the room either?

GINA.

No, not yet.

HIALMAR

That was only to be expected If people won't keep their eyes open—— Nothing can be done without a real effort, Gina !

HEDVIG

[*Going towards him*] Shall I fetch you the flute, father ?

HIALMAR

No ; no flute for me , *I* want no pleasures in this world [*Pacing about*] Yes, indeed I will work to-morrow, you shall see if I don't You may be sure I shall work as long as my strength holds out.

GINA.

But my dear good Ekdal, I didn't mean it in that way

HEDVIG.

Father, mayn't I bring in a bottle of beer?

HIALMAR

No, certainly not I require nothing, nothing—— [*Comes to a standstill*] Beer ? Was it beer you were talking about ?

HEDVIG

[*Cheerfully.*] Yes, father ; beautiful fresh beer.

HIALMAR.

Well—since you insist upon it, you may bring in a bottle

GINA

Yes, do , and we'll be nice and cosy

[*HEDVIG runs towards the kitchen door.*]

HIALMAR.

[*By the stove, stops her, looks at her puts his arm round her neck and presses her to him*] Hedvig, Hedvig!

HEDVIG

[*With tears of joy*] My dear, kind father!

HIALMAR

No, don't call me that Here have I been feasting at the rich man's table,—battening at the groaning board——! And I couldn't even——!

GINA.

[*Sitting at the table*] Oh nonsense, nonsense, Ekdal

HIALMAR

It's not nonsense! And yet you mustn't be too hard upon me You know that I love you for all that

HEDVIG.

[*Throwing her arms round him*] And we love you, oh so dearly, father!

HIALMAR

And if I am unreasonable once in a while,—why then—you must remember that I am a man beset by a host of cares There, there! [*Dries his eyes*] No beer at such a moment as this. Give me the flute

[*HEDVIG runs to the bookcase and fetches it*]

HIALMAR

Thanks! That's right With my flute in my hand and you two at my side—ah——!

[*HEDVIG seats herself at the table near GINA.*]

HIALMAR paces backwards and forwards, pipes up vigorously, and plays a Bohemian peasant dance, but in a slow plaintive tempo, and with sentimental expression

HIALMAR

[Breaking off the melody, holds out his left hand to GINA, and says with emotion] Our roof may be poor and humble, Gina, but it is home And with all my heart I say here dwells my happiness

[He begins to play again, almost immediately after, a knocking is heard at the entrance door]

GINA

[Rising] Hush, Ekdal,—I think there's some one at the door

HIALMAR

[Laying the flute on the bookcase] There! Again!

[GINA goes and opens the door.]

GREGERS WERLE

[In the passage] Excuse me—

GINA

[Starting back slightly] Oh!

GREGERS

—does not Mr Ekdal, the photographer, live here?

GINA

Yes, he does.

HIALMAR

[Going towards the door] Gregers! You here after all? Well, come in then.

GREGERS

[*Coming in*] I told you I would come and look you up

HIALMAR

But this evening——? Have you left the party?

GREGERS

I have left both the party and my father's house—Good evening, Mrs Ekdal. I don't know whether you recognise me?

GINA

Oh yes, it's not difficult to know young Mr Werle again

GREGERS

No, I am like my mother, and no doubt you remember her

HIALMAR

Left your father's house, did you say?

GREGERS

Yes, I have gone to a hotel

HIALMAR

Indeed Well, since you're here, take off your coat and sit down

GREGERS

Thanks

[*He takes off his overcoat. He is now dressed in a plain grey suit of a countryified cut*]

HIALMAR

Here, on the sofa Make yourself comfortable.

[*GREGERS seats himself on the sofa, HIALMAR takes a chair at the table.*]

GREGERS

[*Looking around him*] So these are your quarters,
Hjalmar—this is your home

HIALMAR

This is the studio, as you see——

GINA

But it's the largest of our rooms, so we generally
sit here.

HIALMAR

We used to live in a better place; but this flat
has one great advantage there are such capital
outer rooms——

GINA

And we have a room on the other side of the
passage that we can let

GREGERS

[*To HIALMAR*] Ah—so you have lodgers too?

HIALMAR

No, not yet They're not so easy to find, you
see; you have to keep your eyes open. (*To*
HEDVIG) What about that beer, eh?

[*HEDVIG nods and goes out into the kitchen*]

GREGERS.

So that is your daughter?

HIALMAR.

Yes, that is Hedvig

GREGERS

And she is your only child?

HIALMAR

Yes, the only one She is the joy of our lives,
and—[*lowering his voice*—at the same time our
deepest sorrow, Gregers

GREGERS.

What do you mean ?

HIALMAR.

She is in serious danger of losing her eyesight

GREGERS

Becoming blind ?

HIALMAR

Yes Only the first symptoms have appeared
as yet, and she may not feel it much for some
time But the doctor has warned us It is com-
ing, inexorably

GREGERS

What a terrible misfortune ! How do you
account for it ?

HIALMAR

[*Sighs*] Hereditary, no doubt.

GREGERS.

[*Starting*] Hereditary ?

GINA

Ekdal's mother had weak eyes.

HIALMAR.

Yes, so my father says ; I can't remember her.

GREGERS

Poor child ! And how does she take it ?

HIALMAR

Oh, you can imagine we haven't the heart to tell her of it. She dreams of no danger. Gay and careless and chirping like a little bird, she flutters onward into a life of endless night. [Overcome] Oh, it is cruelly hard on me, Gregers.

[HEDVIG brings a tray with beer and glasses, which she sets upon the table]

HIALMAR

[Stroking her hair.] Thanks, thanks, Hedvig.

[HEDVIG puts her arm round his neck and whispers in his ear]

HIALMAR.

No, no bread and butter just now. [Looks up] But perhaps you would like some, Gregers.

GREGERS

[With a gesture of refusal] No, no thank you.

HIALMAR

[Still melancholy] Well, you can bring in a little all the same. If you have a crust, that is all I want. And plenty of butter on it, mind.

[HEDVIG nods gaily and goes out into the kitchen again]

GREGERS

[Who has been following her with his eyes] She seems quite strong and healthy otherwise.

GINA

Yes. In other ways there's nothing amiss with her, thank goodness.

GREGERS

She promises to be very like you, Mrs Ekdal
How old is she now ?

GINA

Hedvig is close on fourteen, her birthday is
the day after to-morrow

GREGERS

She is pretty tall for her age, then.

GINA

Yes, she's shot up wonderful this last year.

GREGERS

It makes one realise one's own age to see these
young people growing up—How long is it now
since you were married ?

GINA

We've been married—let me see—just on
fifteen years

GREGERS

Is it so long as that ?

GINA

[*Becomes attentive, looks at him*] Yes, it is
indeed

HIALMAR

Yes, so it is Fifteen years all but a few
months [*Changing his tone*] They must have
been long years for you, up at the works,
GREGERS

GREGERS

They seemed long while I was living them;

now they are over, I hardly know how the time has gone

[OLD EKDAL comes from his room without his pipe, but with his old-fashioned uniform cap on his head, his gait is somewhat unsteady]

EKDAL

Come now, Hjalmar, let's sit down and have a good talk about this—h'm—what was it again?

HJALMAR.

[*Going towards him*] Father, we have a visitor here—Gregers Werle—I don't know if you remember him.

EKDAL

[*Looking at GREGERS, who has risen*] Werle? Is that the son? What does he want with me?

HJALMAR

Nothing; it's me he has come to see.

EKDAL

Oh! Then there's nothing wrong?

HJALMAR.

No, no, of course not.

EKDAL

[*With a large gesture*] Not that I'm afraid, you know; but—

GREGERS

[*Goes over to him*] I bring you a greeting from your old hunting-grounds, Lieutenant Ekdal.

EKDAL

Hunting-grounds ?

GREGERS

Yes, up in Hoidal, about the works, you know

EKDAL

Oh, up there Yes, I knew all those places well in the old days

GREGERS

You were a great sportsman then.

EKDAL

So I was, I don't deny it You're looking at my uniform cap I don't ask anybody's leave to wear it in the house So long as I don't go out in the streets with it——

[HEDVIG brings a plate of bread and butter, which she puts upon the table

HIALMAR

Sit down, father, and have a glass of beer
Help yourself, Gregers

[EKDAL mutters and stumbles over to the sofa GREGERS seats himself on the chair nearest to him, HIALMAR on the other side of GREGERS GINA sits a little way from the table, serving, HEDVIG stands beside her father

GREGERS.

Can you remember, Lieutenant Ekdal, how Hialmar and I used to come up and visit you in the summer and at Christmas ?

EKDAL.

Did you? No, no, no, I don't remember it
But sure enough I've been a tidy bit of a sports-
man in my day I've shot bears too I've shot
nine of 'em, no less

GREGERS

[*Looking sympathetically at him*] And now you
never get any shooting?

EKDAL

Can't, just say that, sir Get a shot now and
then perhaps Of course not in the old way
For the woods you see—the woods, the woods——'
[*Drinks*] Are the woods fine up there now?

GREGERS

Not so fine as in your time. They have been
thinned a good deal

EKDAL

Thinned? [*More softly, and as if afraid.*] It's
dangerous work that Bad things come of it
The woods revenge themselves

HIALMAR

[*Filling up his glass.*] Come—a little more,
father

GREGERS

How can a man like you—such a man for the
open air—live in the midst of a stuffy town, boxed
within four walls?

EKDAL.

[*Laughs quietly and glances at HIALMAR*] Oh, it's
not so bad here Not at all so bad.

GREGERS

But don't you miss all the things that used to be a part of your very being—the cool sweeping breezes, the free life in the woods and on the uplands, among beasts and birds——?

EKDAL

[*Smiling*] Hjalmar, shall we let him see it?

HIALMAR

[*Hastily and a little embarrassed*] Oh no no, father, not this evening

GREGERS

What does he want to show me?

HIALMAR

Oh, it's only something—you can see it another time

GREGERS

[*Continues, to the old man*] You see I have been thinking, Lieutenant Ekdal, that you should come up with me to the works, I am sure to be going back soon. No doubt you could get some copying there too. And here, you have nothing on earth to interest you—nothing to liven you up

EKDAL

[*Stares in astonishment at him*] Have I nothing on earth to——?

GREGERS

Of course you have Hjalmar, but then he has his own family. And a man like you, who has always had such a passion for what is free and wild——

EKDAL

[*Thumps the table*] Hialmar, he shall see it !

HIALMAR

Oh, do you think it's worth while, father ? It's all dark

EKDAL

Nonsense, it's moonlight [*Rises*] He shall see it, I tell you Let me pass ! Come and help me, Hialmar

HEDVIG

Oh yes, do, father !

HIALMAR

[*Rising.*] Very well then

GREGERS.

[*To GINA*] What is it ?

GINA

Oh, nothing so very wonderful, after all.

[*EKDAL and HIALMAR have gone to the back wall and are each pushing back a side of the sliding door, HEDVIG helps the old man, GREGERS remains standing by the sofa, GINA sits still and sees Through the open doorway a large, deep irregular garret is seen with odd nooks and corners, a couple of stove-pipes running through it, from rooms below There are skylights through which clear moonbeams shine in on some parts of the great room, others lie in deep shadow*]

EKDAL

[*To GREGERS*] You may come close up if you like.

GREGERS

[*Going over to them*] Why, what is it?

EKDAL

Look for yourself H'm

HIALMAR

[*Somewhat embarrassed*] This belongs to father, you understand

GREGERS

[*At the door, looks into the garret*] Why, you keep poultry, Lieutenant Ekdal

EKDAL

Should think we did keep poultry They've gone to roost now But you should just see our fowls by daylight, sir!

HEDVIG

And there's a——

EKDAL

Sh—sh! don't say anything about it yet.

GREGERS.

And you have pigeons too, I see.

EKDAL

Oh yes, haven't we just got pigeons! They have their nest-boxes up there under the roof-tree; for pigeons like to roost high, you see

HIALMAR

They aren't all common pigeons.

EKDAL.

Common! Should think not indeed! We

have tumblers, and a pair of pouters, too. But come here ! Can you see that hutch down there by the wall ?

GREGERS

Yes, what do you use it for ?

EKDAL

That's where the rabbits sleep, sir.

GREGERS

Dear me, so you have rabbits too ?

EKDAL

Yes, you may take my word for it, we have rabbits ! He wants to know if we have rabbits, Hjalmar ! H'm ! But now comes the thing, let me tell you ! Here we have it ! Move away, Hedvig ! Stand here ; that's right,—and now look down there —Don't you see a basket with straw in it ?

GREGERS

Yes And I can see a fowl lying in the basket

EKDAL.

H'm—"a fowl"—

GREGERS

Isn't it a duck ?

EKDAL

[*Hurt*] Why, of course it's a duck.

HJALMAR

But what kind of duck, do you think ?

HEDVIG

It's not just a common duck—

EKDAL

Sh !

GREGERS

And it's not a Muscovy duck either.

EKDAL.

No, Mr —Weile, it's not a Muscovy duck ; for
it's a wild duck !

GREGERS

Is it really ? A wild duck ?

EKDAL

Yes, that's what it is That " fowl " as you call
it—is the wild duck. It's our wild duck, sir.

HEDVIG

My wild duck It belongs to me.

GREGERS

And can it live up here in the garret ? Does
it thrive ?

EKDAL

Of course it has a trough of water to splash
about in, you know

HIALMAR

Fresh water every other day.

GINA

[*Turning towards* HIALMAR] But my dear
Ekdal, it's getting icy cold here.

EKDAL

H'm, we had better shut up then. It's as well

not to disturb their night's rest, too. Close up, Hedvig

[HIALMAR and HEDVIG push the garret doors together]

EKDAL

Another time you shall see her properly [Seats herself in the arm-chair by the stove] Oh, they're curious things, these wild ducks, I can tell you.

GREGERS

How did you manage to catch it, Lieutenant Ekdal?

EKDAL

I didn't catch it. There's a certain man in this town whom we have to thank for it.

GREGERS

[Starts slightly] That man was not my father, was he?

EKDAL

You've hit it. Your father and no one else H'm

HIALMAR

Strange that you should guess that, Gregers.

GREGERS

You were telling me that you owed so many things to my father; and so I thought perhaps——

GINA

But we didn't get the duck from Mr Werle himself——

EKDAL

It's Håkon Werle we have to thank for her, all

the same, Gina [To GREGERS] He was shooting from a boat, you see, and he brought her down But your father's sight is not very good now H'm; she was only wounded

GREGERS

Ah! She got a couple of slugs in her body, I suppose

HIALMAR.

Yes, two or three

HEDVIG

She was hit under the wing, so that she couldn't fly

GREGERS

And I suppose she dived to the bottom, eh?

EKDAL

[*Sleepily, in a thick voice*] Of course. Always do that, wild ducks do They shoot to the bottom as deep as they can get, sir—and bite themselves fast in the tangle and seaweed—and all the devil's own mess that grows down there And they never come up again.

GREGERS

But your wild duck came up again, Lieutenant Ekdal

EKDAL

*He had such an amazingly clever dog, your father had And that dog—he dived in after the duck and fetched her up again.

GREGERS

[*Who has turned to* HIALMAR.] And then she was sent to you here?

HIALMAR

Not at once, at first your father took her home. But she wouldn't thrive there, so Pettersen was told to put an end to her——

EKDAL

[*Half asleep*] H'm — yes — Pettersen — that
ass——

HIALMAR

[*Speaking more softly*] That was how we got her, you see, for father knows Pettersen a little, and when he heard about the wild duck he got him to hand her over to us

GREGERS

And now she thrives as well as possible in the garret there?

HIALMAR

Yes, wonderfully well. She has got fat. You see, she has lived in there so long now that she has forgotten her natural wild life, and it all depends on that

GREGERS

You are right there, Hialmar. Be sure you never let her get a glimpse of the sky and the sea——. But I mustn't stay any longer, I think your father is asleep

HIALMAR.

Oh, as for that——

GREGERS

But, by-the-bye—you said you had a room to let—a spare room?

HIALMAR

Yes; what then? Do you know of anybody——?

GREGERS

Can I have that room?

HIALMAR.

You?

GINA

Oh no, Mr Weile, you——

GREGERS

May I have the room? If so, I'll take possession first thing to-morrow morning

HIALMAR

Yes, with the greatest pleasure——

GINA

But, Mr Weile, I'm sure it's not at all the sort of room for you

HIALMAR

Why, Gina! how can you say that?

GINA

Why, because the room's neither large enough nor light enough, and——

GREGERS

That really doesn't matter, Mrs Ekdal.

HIALMAR

I call it quite a nice room, and not at all badly furnished either.

GINA

But remember the pair of them underneath.

GREGERS

What pair ?

GINA

Well, there's one as has been a tutor——

HIALMAR

That's Molvik—Mr Molvik, B.A.

GINA

And then there's a doctor, by the name of Relling

GREGERS.

Relling ? I know him a little ; he practised for a time up in Høidal

GINA

They're a regular rackety pair, they are As often as not, they're out on the loose in the evenings, and then they come home at all hours, and they're not always just——

GREGERS

One soon gets used to that sort of thing I daresay I shall be like the wild duck——

GINA

H'm ; I think you ought to sleep upon it first, anyway

GREGERS

You seem very unwilling to have me in the house, Mrs. Ekdal

GINA.

Oh no ! What makes you think that ?

HIALMAR

Well, you really behave strangely about it, Gina
[To GREGERS] Then I suppose you intend to
remain in the town for the present ?

GREGERS

[Putting on his overcoat] Yes, now I intend to
remain here.

HIALMAR

And yet not at your father's ? What do you
propose to do, then ?

GREGERS

Ah, if I only knew that, Hialmar, I shouldn't
be so badly off ! But when one has the mis-
fortune to be called Gregers— ! "Gregers"—
and then "Werle" after it, did you ever hear
anything so hideous ?

HIALMAR.

Oh, I don't think so at all

GREGERS

Ugh ! Bah ! I feel I should like to spit upon
the fellow that answers to such a name But
when a man is once for all doomed to be Gregers
—Werle in this world, as I am——

HIALMAR

[Laughs] Ha ha ! If you weren't Gregers
Werle, what would you like to be ? ,

GREGERS

If I could choose, I should like best to be a
clever dog

GINA.

A dog !

HEDVIG.

[*Involuntarily*] Oh no!

GREGERS.

Yes, an amazingly clever dog, one that goes to the bottom after wild ducks when they dive and bite themselves fast in tangle and sea-weed, down among the ooze

HIALMAR.

Upon my word now, Gregers—I don't in the least know what you're driving at.

GREGERS

Oh well, you might not be much the wiser if you did. It's understood, then, that I move in early to-morrow morning [*To GINA*] I won't give you any trouble, I do everything for myself [*To HIALMAR*] We can talk about the rest to-morrow—Good-night, Mrs. Ekdal. [*Nods to HEDVIG*] Good-night

GINA.

Good-night, Mr Werle

HEDVIG

Good-night

HIALMAR

[*Who has lighted a candle*] Wait a moment, I must show you a light, the stairs are sure to be dark.

[*GREGERS and HIALMAR go out by the passage door*]

GINA.

[*Looking straight before her, with her serving in her lap*] Wasn't that queer-like talk about wanting to be a dog?

HEDVIG

Do you know, mother—I believe he meant something quite different by that.

GINA

Why, what should he mean ?

HEDVIG

Oh, I don't know; but it seemed to me he meant something different from what he said—all the time

GINA.

Do you think so ? Yes, it was sort of queer.

HIALMAR

[*Comes back*] The lamp was still burning [*Puts out the candle and sets it down*] Ah, now one can get a mouthful of food at last [*Begins to eat the bread and butter*] Well, you see, Gina—if only you keep your eyes open——

GINA

How, keep your eyes open—— ?

HIALMAR

Why, haven't we at last had the luck to get the room let ? And just think—to a person like Gregers—a good old friend

GINA

Well, I don't know what to say about it.

HEDVIG

Oh mother, you'll see, it'll be such fun !

HIALMAR.

You're very strange You were so bent upon getting the room let before, and now you don't like it

GINA.

Yes I do, Ekdal; if it had only been to some one else—— But what do you suppose Mr. Werle will say?

HIALMAR

Old Werle? It doesn't concern him.

GINA

But surely you can see that there's something amiss between them again, or the young man wouldn't be leaving home You know very well those two can't get on with each other.

HIALMAR

Very likely not, but——

GINA

And now Mr Werle may fancy it's you that has egged him on——

HIALMAR

Let him fancy so, then! Mr Werle has done a great deal for me, far be it from me to deny it But that doesn't make me everlastingly dependent upon him.

GINA.

But, my dear Ekdal, maybe grandfather 'll suffer for it He may loose the little bit of work he gets from Gråberg.

HIALMAR.

I could almost say so much the better! Is it

not humiliating for a man like me to see his grey-haired father treated as a pariah ? But now I believe the fulness of time is at hand [*Takes a fresh piece of bread and butter*] As sure as I have a mission in life, I mean to fulfil it now !

HEDVIG.

Oh yes, father, do !

GINA.

Hush ! Don't wake him !

HALMAR

[*More softly*] I will fulfil it, I say The day shall come when—— And that is why I say it's a good thing we have let the room, for that makes me more independent The man who has a mission in life must be independent [*By the arm-chair, with emotion*] Poor old white-haired father ! Rely on your Hjalmar He has broad shoulders—strong shoulders, at any rate. You shall yet wake up some fine day and—— [*To GINA*] Do you not believe it ?

GINA

[*Rising*] Yes, of course I do, but in the meantime suppose we see about getting him to bed

HALMAR

Yes, come.

[*They take hold of the old man carefully*]

ACT THIRD.

HIALMAR EKDAL'S studio *It is morning the daylight shines through the large window in the slanting roof, the curtain is drawn back*

HIALMAR *is sitting at the table, busy retouching a photograph, several others lie before him Presently GINA, wearing her hat and cloak, enters by the passage door, she has a covered basket on her arm*

HIALMAR.

Back already, Gina ?

GINA

Oh yes, one can't let the grass grow under one's feet.

[Sets her basket on a chair, and takes off her things

HIALMAR

Did you look in at Gregers' room ?

GINA

Yes, that I did It's a rare sight, I can tell you; he's made a pretty mess to start off with

HIALMAR

How so ?

GINA.

He was determined to do everything for himself, he said, so he sets to work to light the stove, and

what must he do but screw down the damper till the whole room is full of smoke. Ugh! There was a smell fit to——

HIALMAR.

Well, really!

GINA

But that's not the worst of it, for then he thinks he'll put out the fire, and goes and empties his water-jug into the stove, and so makes the whole floor one filthy puddle

HIALMAR

How annoying!

GINA

I've got the porter's wife to clear up after him, pig that he is! But the room won't be fit to live in till the afternoon

HIALMAR.

What's he doing with himself in the meantime?

GINA

He said he was going out for a little while.

HIALMAR.

I looked in upon him too, for a moment—after you had gone

GINA.

So I heard. You've asked him to lunch.

HIALMAR

Just to a little bit of early lunch, you know. It's his first day—we can hardly do less. You've got something in the house, I suppose?

GINA

I shall have to find something or other.

HIALMAR

And don't cut it too fine, for I fancy Relling and Molvik are coming up too I just happened to meet Relling on the stairs, you see, so I had to——

GINA

Oh, are we to have those two as well ?

HIALMAR

Good Lord—a couple more or less can't make any difference.

OLD EKDAL

[*Opens his door and looks in*] I say, Hialmar——
[*Sees GINA*] Oh !

GINA.

Do you want anything, grandfather ?

EKDAL.

Oh no, it doesn't matter H'm'

[*Retires again.*]

GINA

[*Takes up the basket.*] Be sure you see that he doesn't go out

HIALMAR.

All right, all right. And, Gina, a little herring-salad wouldn't be a bad idea, Relling and Molvik were out on the loose again last night

GINA.

If only they don't come before I'm ready for them——

HIALMAR

No, of course they won't; take your own time

GINA

Very well; and meanwhile you can be working a bit

HIALMAR

Well, I am working! I am working as hard as I can!

GINA

Then you'll have that job off your hands, you see

[*She goes out to the kitchen with her basket*
[HIALMAR sits for a time pencilling away at the photograph, in an indolent and listless manner

EKDAL

[*Peeps in, looks round the studio, and says softly*] Are you busy?

HIALMAR.

Yes I'm toiling at these wretched pictures——

EKDAL

Well well, never mind,—since you're so busy—h'm! [*He goes out again, the door stands open.*

HIALMAR

[*Continues for some time in silence; then he lays down his brush and goes over to the door*] Are you busy, father?

EKDAL

[*In a grumbling tone, within*] If you're busy, I'm busy too H'm!

HIALMAR

Oh, very well, then. [*Goes to his work again.*

EKDAL.

[*Presently, coming to the door again*] H'm, I say, Hialmar, I'm not so very busy, you know.

HIALMAR.

I thought you were writing.

EKDAL.

Oh, devil take it! can't Gråberg wait a day or two? After all, it's not a matter of life and death

HIALMAR.

No, and you're not his slave either.

EKDAL.

And about that other business in there——

HIALMAR

Just what I was thinking of. Do you want to go in. Shall I open the door for you?

EKDAL

Well, it wouldn't be a bad notion.

HIALMAR.

[*Rises*] Then we'd have that off our hands.

EKDAL

Yes, exactly. It's got to be ready first thing to-morrow. It is to-morrow, isn't it? H'm?

HIALMAR.

Yes, of course it's to-morrow.

[*HIALMAR and EKDAL push aside each his*

half of the sliding door The morning sun is shining in through the skylights, some doves are flying about; others sit cooing, upon the perches, the hens are heard clucking now and then, further back in the garret

HIALMAR

There; now you can get to work, father.

EKDAL.

[*Goes in*] Aren't you coming too?

HIALMAR.

Well really, do you know——, I almost think —— [*Sees GINA at the kitchen door*] I? No, I haven't time, I must work — But now for our new contrivance——

[*He pulls a cord, a curtain slips down inside, the lower part consisting of a piece of old sailcloth, the upper part of a stretched fishing net The floor of the garret is thus no longer visible*

HIALMAR

[*Goes to the table*] So! Now, perhaps I can sit in peace for a little while

GINA

Is he rampaging in there again?

HIALMAR

Would you rather have had him slip down to Madam Eriksen's. [*Sits himself*] Do you want anything? You know you said——

GINA

I only wanted to ask if you think we can lay the table for lunch here ?

HIALMAR

Yes, we have no early appointment, I suppose ?

GINA.

No, I expect no one to day except those two sweethearts that are to be taken together

HIALMAR

Why the deuce couldn't they be taken together another day !

GINA

Don't you know, I told them to come in the afternoon, when you are having your nap

HIALMAR

Oh, that's capital. Very well, let us have lunch here then

GINA.

All right, but there's no hurry about laying the cloth, you can have the table for a good while yet

HIALMAR.

Do you think I am not sticking at my work ? I'm at it as hard as I can !

GINA.

Then you'll be free later on, you know.

[Goes out into the kitchen again Short pause]

EKDAL

[In the garret doorway, behind the net.] Hialmar !

HIALMAR

Well ?

EKDAL

Afraid we shall have to move the water-trough,
after all

HIALMAR

What else have I been saying all along ?

EKDAL.

H'm—h'm—h'm.

[Goes away from the door again
[HIALMAR goes on working a little, glances
towards the garret and half rises HEDVIG
comes in from the kitchen

HIALMAR

[Sits down again hurriedly] What do you want ?

HEDVIG

I only wanted to come in beside you, father

HIALMAR

[After a pause] What makes you go prying
around like that ? Perhaps you are told off to
watch me ?

HEDVIG.

No, no

HIALMAR

What is your mother doing out there ?

HEDVIG

Oh, mother's in the middle of making the her-
ring-salad [Goes to the table] Isn't there any
little thing I could help you with, father ?

HIALMAR

Oh no. It is right that I should bear the whole burden—so long as my strength holds out. Set your mind at rest, Hedvig, if only your father keeps his health——

HEDVIG.

Oh no, father! You mustn't talk in that horrid way.

[She wanders about a little, stops by the doorway and looks into the garret.]

HIALMAR

Tell me, what is he doing?

HEDVIG

I think he's making a new path to the water-trough.

HIALMAR

He can never manage that by himself! And here am I doomed to sit——!

HEDVIG

[Goes to him] Let me take the brush, father; I can do it, quite well

HIALMAR.

Oh nonsense; you will only hurt your eyes.

HEDVIG

Not a bit. Give me the brush.

HIALMAR

[Rising] Well, it won't take more than a minute or two.

HEDVIG

Pooh, what harm can it do then? [*Takes the brush*] There! [*Seats herself*] I can begin upon this one.

HIALMAR.

But mind you don't hurt your eyes! Do you hear? I won't be answerable, you do it on your own responsibility—understand that

HEDVIG

[*Retouching*] Yes yes, I understand.

HIALMAR.

You are quite clever at it, Hedvig Only a minute or two, you know

[*He slips through by the edge of the curtain into the garret. HEDVIG sits at her work HIALMAR and EKDAL are heard disputing inside*

HIALMAR.

[*Appears behind the net*] I say, Hedvig—give me those pincers that are lying on the shelf And the chisel [*Turns away inside*] Now you shall see, father. Just let me show you first what I mean!

[*HEDVIG has fetched the required tools from the shelf, and hands them to him through the net.*

HIALMAR.

Ah, thanks. I didn't come a moment too soon

[*Goes back from the curtain again; they are heard carpentering and talking inside HEDVIG stands looking in at them A moment later there is a knock at the passage door, she does not notice it.*

GREGERS WERLE

[*Bareheaded, in indoor dress, enters and stops near the door*] H'm——'

HEDVIG.

[*Turns and goes towards him*] Good morning
Please come in

GREGERS

Thank you [*Looking towards the garret*] You seem to have workpeople in the house.

HEDVIG

No, it is only father and grandfather I'll tell them you are here

GREGERS

No no, don't do that, I would rather wait a little.
[*Sits himself on the sofa*]

HEDVIG.

It looks so untidy here——

[*Begins to clear away the photographs*]

GREGERS

Oh, don't take them away Are those prints that have to be finished off?

HEDVIG

Yes, they are a few I was helping father with

GREGERS

Please don't let me disturb you.

HEDVIG.

Oh no.

[*She gathers the things to her and sits down to work, GREGERS looks at her, meanwhile, in silence.*]

GREGERS.

Did the wild duck sleep well last night ?

HEDVIG.

Yes, I think so, thanks

GREGERS.

[*Turning towards the garret*] It looks quite different by day from what it did last night in the moonlight

HEDVIG

Yes, it changes ever so much It looks different in the morning and in the afternoon, and it's different on rainy days from what it is in fine weather

GREGERS

Have you noticed that ?

HEDVIG

Yes, how could I help it ?

GREGERS

Are you, too, fond of being in there with the wild duck ?

HEDVIG

Yes, when I can manage it——

GREGERS

But I suppose you haven't much spare time, you go to school, no doubt.

HEDVIG

No, not now ; father is afraid of my hurting my eyes

GREGERS

Oh, then he reads with you himself?

HEDVIG

Father has promised to read with me, but he has never had time yet.

GREGERS

Then is there nobody else to give you a little help?

HEDVIG

Yes, there is Mr Molvik; but he is not always exactly—quite——

GREGERS.

Sober?

HEDVIG.

Yes, I suppose that's it!

GREGERS

Why, then you must have any amount of time on your hands And in there I suppose it is a sort of world by itself?

HEDVIG.

Oh yes, quite And there are such lots of wonderful things.

GREGERS.

Indeed?

HEDVIG.

Yes, there are big cupboards full of books, and a great many of the books have pictures in them.

GREGERS

Aha!

HEDVIG

And there's an old bureau with drawers and

flaps, and a big clock with figures that go out and in. But the clock isn't going now.

GREGERS

So time has come to a standstill in there—in the wild duck's domain

HEDVIG.

Yes And then there's an old paint-box and things of that sort, and all the books

GREGERS

And you read the books, I suppose?

HEDVIG.

Oh yes, when I get the chance Most of them are English though, and I don't understand English But then I look at the pictures—There is one great big book called "Harrison's History of London"¹ It must be a hundred years old, and there are such heaps of pictures in it At the beginning there is Death with an hour-glass and a woman I think that is horrid But then there are all the other pictures of churches, and castles, and streets, and great ships sailing on the sea

GREGERS

But tell me, where did all those wonderful things come from?

HEDVIG

Oh, an old sea captain once lived here, and he brought them home with him They used to call him "The Flying Dutchman" That was curious, because he wasn't a Dutchman at all

¹ *A New and Universal History of the Cities of London and Westminster*, by Walter Harrison London, 1775, folio

GREGERS.

Was he not ?

HEDVIG

No But at last he was drowned at sea , and so he left all those things behind him

GREGERS

Tell me now—when you are sitting in there looking at the pictures, don't you wish you could travel and see the real world for yourself ?

HEDVIG

Oh no ! I mean always to stay at home and help father and mother

GREGERS.

To retouch photographs ?

HEDVIG

No, not only that I should love above everything to learn to engrave pictures like those in the English books

GREGERS

H'm. What does your father say to that ?

HEDVIG

I don't think father likes it, father is strange about such things Only think, he talks of my learning basket-making, and straw-plaiting ! But I don't think that would be much good.

GREGERS

Oh no, I don't think so either

HEDVIG

But father was right in saying that if I had

leaint basket-making I could have made the new basket for the wild duck

GREGERS

So you could, and it was you that ought to have done it, wasn't it ?

HEDVIG.

Yes, for it's my wild duck.

GREGERS.

Of course it is.

HEDVIG.

Yes, it belongs to me But I lend it to father and grandfather as often as they please.

GREGERS

Indeed ? What do they do with it ?

HEDVIG

Oh, they look after it, and build places for it, and so on.

GREGERS

I see, for no doubt the wild duck is by far the most distinguished inhabitant of the garret ?

HEDVIG

Yes, indeed she is, for she is a real wild fowl, you know And then she is so much to be pitied, she has no one to care for, poor thing

GREGERS

She has no family, as the rabbits have——

HEDVIG

No. The hens too, many of them, were

chickens together, but she has been taken right away from all her friends. And then there is so much that is strange about the wild duck. Nobody knows her, and nobody knows where she came from either.

GREGERS

And she has been down in the depths of the sea

HEDVIG

[*With a quick glance at him, represses a smile and asks*] Why do you say "the depths of the sea"?

GREGERS

What else should I say?

HEDVIG

You could say "the bottom of the sea."¹

GREGERS.

Oh, mayn't I just as well say the depths of the sea?

HEDVIG.

Yes; but it sounds so strange to me when other people speak of the depths of the sea.

GREGERS.

Why so? Tell me why?

HEDVIG.

No, I won't; it's so stupid

¹ Gregers here uses the old-fashioned expression "havsens bund," while Hedvig would have him use the more common-place "havets bund" or "havbunden."

GREGERS

Oh no, I am sure it's not. Do tell me why you smiled

HEDVIG

Well, this is the reason whenever I come to realise suddenly—in a flash—what is in there, it always seems to me that the whole room and everything in it should be called “the depths of the sea”—But that is so stupid

GREGERS

You mustn't say that

HEDVIG

Oh yes, for you know it is only a garret.

GREGERS

[*Looks fixedly at her*] Are you so sure of that?

HEDVIG

[*Astonished*] That it's a garret?

GREGERS

Are you quite certain of it?

[*HEDVIG is silent, and looks at him open-mouthed. GINA comes in from the kitchen with the table things*

GREGERS

[*Rising.*] I have come in upon you too early.

GINA

Oh, you must be somewhere; and we're nearly ready now, any way Clear the table, Hedvig

[*HEDVIG clears away her things, she and*

*GINA lay the cloth during what follows
GREGERS seats himself in the arm-chair,
and turns over an album*

GREGERS

I hear you can retouch, Mrs. Ekdal.

GINA

[*With a side glance*] Yes, I can.

GREGERS.

That was exceedingly lucky.

GINA.

How—lucky?

GREGERS.

Since Ekdal took to photography, I mean.

HEDVIG

Mother can take photographs too.

GINA

Oh, yes, I was bound to learn that.

GREGERS

So it is really you that carry on the business, I suppose?

GINA.

Yes, when Ekdal hasn't time himself——

GREGERS

He is a great deal taken up with his old father, I daresay.

GINA

Yes; and then you can't expect a man like

Ekdal to do nothing but take car-de-visits of Dick, Tom and Harry

GREGERS

I quite agree with you ; but having once gone in for the thing——

GINA.

You can surely understand, Mr Werle, that Ekdal's not like one of your common photographers

GREGERS.

Of course not ; but still——

[A shot is fired within the garret.]

GREGERS

[Starting up] What's that ?

GINA

Ugh ! now they're firing again !

GREGERS

Have they firearms in there ?

HEDVIG

They are out shooting

GREGERS

What ! *[At the door of the garret]* Are you shooting, Hjalmar ?

HJALMAR.

[Inside the net] Are you there ? I didn't know ; I was so taken up—— *[To HEDVIG]* Why did you not let us know ?

[Comes into the studio.]

GREGERS

Do you go shooting in the garret ?

HIALMAR.

[*Showing a double-barrelled pistol*] Oh, only with this thing.

GINA

Yes, you and grandfather will do yourselves a mischief some day with that there pigstol

HIALMAR

[*With irritation*] I believe I have told you that this kind of firearm is called a pistol.

GINA

Oh, that doesn't make it much better, that I can see

GREGERS

So you have become a sportsman too, Hialmar

HIALMAR.

Only a little rabbit-shooting now and then Mostly to please father, you understand.

GINA.

Men are strange beings; they must always have something to pervert themselves with.

HIALMAR.

[*Snappishly*] Just so, we must always have something to divert ourselves with.

GINA.

Yes, that's just what I say.

HIALMAR.

H'm [To GREGERS] You see the garret is fortunately so situated that no one can hear us shooting [Lays the pistol on the top shelf of the book-case] Don't touch the pistol, Hedvig! One of the barrels is loaded, remember that

GREGERS

[Looking through the net] You have a fowling-piece too, I see

HIALMAR

That is father's old gun It's of no use now something has gone wrong with the lock But it's fun to have it all the same, for we can take it to pieces now and then, and clean and grease it, and screw it together again—Of course, it's mostly father that fiddle-faddles with all that sort of thing.

HEDVIG

[Beside GREGERS] Now you can see the wild duck properly

GREGERS

I was just looking at her One of her wings seems to me to droop a bit.

HEDVIG

Well, no wonder; her wing was broken, you know.

GREGERS

And she trails one foot a little. Isn't that so?

HIALMAR.

Perhaps a very little bit.

HEDVIG

Yes, it was by that foot the dog took hold of her

HIALMAR

But otherwise she hasn't the least thing the matter with her, and that is simply marvellous for a creature that has a charge of shot in her body, and has been between a dog's teeth——

GREGERS

[*With a glance at HEDVIG*]——and that has lain in the depths of the sea——so long

HEDVIG.

[*Smiling*] Yes.

GINA

[*Laying the table*] That blessed wild duck
What a lot of fuss you do make over her

HIALMAR

H'm ;—will lunch soon be ready ?

GINA.

Yes, directly. Hedvig, you must come and help me now

[*GINA and HEDVIG go out into the kitchen*]

HIALMAR

[*In a low voice*] I think you had better not stand there looking in at father; he doesn't like it. [GREGERS moves away from the garret door.] Besides I may as well shut up before the others come [Claps his hands to drive the fowls back.] Shh—shh, in with you! [Draws up the curtain and pulls the doors together] All the contri-

vances are my own invention. It's really quite amusing to have things of this sort to potter with, and to put to rights when they get out of order. And it's absolutely necessary, too; for Gina objects to having rabbits and fowls in the studio.

GREGERS

To be sure, and I suppose the studio is your wife's special department?

HIALMAR

As a rule, I leave the everyday details of business to her, for then I can take refuge in the parlour and give my mind to more important things.

GREGERS

What things may they be, Hialmar?

HIALMAR.

I wonder you have not asked that question sooner. But perhaps you haven't heard of the invention?

GREGERS.

The invention? No.

HIALMAR.

Really? Have you not? Oh no, out there in the wilds——

GREGERS

So you have invented something, have you?

HIALMAR

It is not quite completed yet, but I am working at it. You can easily imagine that when I resolved to devote myself to photography, it wasn't simply

with the idea of taking likenesses of all sorts of commonplace people

GREGERS.

No, your wife was saying the same thing just now

HIALMAR

I swore that if I consecrated my powers to this handicraft, I would so exalt it that it should become both an art and a science And to that end I determined to make this great invention

GREGERS

And what is the nature of the invention? What purpose does it serve?

HIALMAR

Oh, my dear fellow, you mustn't ask for details yet It takes time, you see And you must not think that my motive is vanity. It is not for my own sake that I am working Oh no, it is my life's mission that stands before me night and day

GREGERS

What is your life's mission?

HIALMAR

Do you forget the old man with the silver hair?

GREGERS

Your poor father? Well, but what can you do for him?

HIALMAR

I can raise up his self-respect from the dead, by restoring the name of Ekdal to honour and dignity.

GREGERS

Then that is your life's mission ?

HIALMAR

Yes I will rescue the shipwrecked man For shipwrecked he was, by the very first blast of the storm Even while those terrible investigations were going on, he was no longer himself That pistol there—the one we use to shoot rabbits with—has played its part in the tragedy of the house of Ekdal

GREGERS.

The pistol ? Indeed ?

HIALMAR.

When the sentence of imprisonment was passed—he had the pistol in his hand——

GREGERS.

Had he—— ?

HIALMAR.

Yes, but he dared not use it His courage failed him So broken, so demoralised was he even then ! Oh, can you understand it ? He, a soldier, he, who had shot nine bears, and who was descended from two lieutenant-colonels—one after the other of course Can you understand it, Gregers ?

GREGERS.

*Yes, I understand it well enough.

HIALMAR.

I cannot And once more the pistol played a part in the history of our house When he had put on the grey clothes and was under lock and

key—oh, that was a terrible time for me, I can tell you. I kept the blinds drawn down over both my windows. When I peeped out, I saw the sun shining as if nothing had happened. I could not understand it. I saw people going along the street, laughing and talking about indifferent things. I could not understand it. It seemed to me that the whole of existence must be at a standstill—as if under an eclipse.

GREGERS

I felt like that too, when my mother died.

HALMAR

It was in such an hour that Hjalmar Ekdal pointed the pistol at his own breast.

GREGERS

You too thought of——!

HALMAR.

Yes.

GREGERS.

But you did not fire?

HALMAR

No. At the decisive moment I won the victory over myself. I remained in life. But I can assure you it takes some courage to choose life under circumstances like those.

GREGERS

Well, that depends on how you look at it.

HALMAR

Yes, indeed, it takes courage. But I am glad I

was firm for now I shall soon perfect my invention, and Dr. Relling thinks, as I do myself, that father may be allowed to wear his uniform again. I will demand that as my sole reward.

GREGERS

So that is what he meant about his uniform——?

HIALMAR

Yes, that is what he most yearns for. You can't think how my heart bleeds for him. Every time we celebrate any little family festival—Gina's and my wedding-day, or whatever it may be—in comes the old man in the lieutenant's uniform of happier days. But if he only hears a knock at the door—for he daresn't show himself to strangers, you know—he hurries back to his room again as fast as his old legs can carry him. Oh, it's heart-rending for a son to see such things!

GREGERS

How long do you think it will take you to finish your invention?

HIALMAR.

Come now, you mustn't expect me to enter into particulars like that. An invention is not a thing completely under one's own control. It depends largely on inspiration—on intuition—and it is almost impossible to predict when the inspiration may come.

GREGERS

But it's advancing?

HIALMAR.

Yes, certainly, it is advancing. I turn it over in

my mind every day, I am full of it Every afternoon, when I have had my dinner, I shut myself up in the parlour, where I can ponder undisturbed But I can't be goaded to it, it's not a bit of good, Relling says so too

GREGERS

And you don't think that all that business in the gairret draws you off and distracts you too much?

HIALMAR

No no no, quite the contrary You mustn't say that I cannot be everlastingly absorbed in the same laborious train of thought I must have something alongside of it to fill up the time of waiting The inspiration, the intuition, you see—when it comes, it comes, and there's an end of it.

GREGERS

My dear Hialmar, I almost think you have something of the wild duck in you

HIALMAR

Something of the wild duck? How do you mean?

GREGERS

You have dived down and bitten yourself fast in the undergrowth

HIALMAR

Are you alluding to the well-nigh fatal shot that has broken my father's wing—and mine too?

GREGERS

Not exactly to that I don't say that your wing has been broken; but you have strayed into a

poisonous marsh, Hjalmar, an insidious disease has taken hold of you, and you have sunk down to die in the dark

HJALMAR

I ? To die in the dark ? Look here, Gregers, you must really leave off talking such nonsense

GREGERS

Don't be afraid, I shall find a way to help you up again I too have a mission in life now, I found it yesterday

HJALMAR

That's all very well; but you will please leave me out of it I can assure you that—apart from my very natural melancholy, of course—I am as contented as any one can wish to be

GREGERS

Your contentment is an effect of the marsh poison.

HJALMAR

Now, my dear Gregers, pray do not go on about disease and poison, I am not used to that sort of talk In my house nobody ever speaks to me about unpleasant things.

GREGERS

Ah, that I can easily believe.

HJALMAR

It's not good for me you see And there are no marsh poisons here, as you express it The poor photographer's roof is lowly, I know—and my circumstances are narrow But I am an inventor, and I am the breadwinner of a family That exalts

me above my mean surroundings.—Ah, here comes lunch !

GINA and HEDVIG bring bottles of ale, a decanter of brandy, glasses, etc. At the same time, RELLING and MOLVIK enter from the passage, they are both without hat or overcoat. MOLVIK is dressed in black.

GINA

[Placing the things upon the table] Ah, you two have come in the nick of time

RELLING

Molvik got it into his head that he could smell herring-salad, and then there was no holding him.—Good morning again, Ekdal

HIALMAR

Gregers, let me introduce you to Mr. Molvik. Doctor—— Oh, you know Relling, don't you ?

GREGERS.

Yes, slightly.

RELLING

Oh, Mr Werle, junior ! Yes, we two have had one or two little skirmishes up at the Hoidal works. You've just moved in ?

GREGERS.

I moved in this morning.

RELLING.

Molvik and I live right under you, so you haven't far to go for the doctor and the clergyman, if you should need anything in that line.

GREGERS.

Thanks, it's not quite unlikely, for yesterday we were thirteen at table.

HIALMAR

Oh, come now, don't let us get upon unpleasant subjects again!

RELLING

You may make your mind easy, Ekdal, I'll be hanged if the finger of fate points to you

HIALMAR.

I should hope not, for the sake of my family
But let us sit down now, and eat and drink and be
merry

GREGERS

Shall we not wait for your father?

HIALMAR

No, his lunch will be taken in to him later
Come along!

*[The men seat themselves at table, and eat
and drink GINA and HEDVIG go in and
out and wait upon them]*

RELLING

Molvik was frightfully screwed yesterday, Mrs
Ekdal

GINA

Really? Yesterday again?

RELLING.

Didn't you hear him when I brought him home
last night

GINA

No, I can't say I did

RELLING

That was a good thing, for Molvik was disgusting last night

GINA.

Is that true, Molvik ?

MOLVIK

Let us draw a veil over last night's proceedings
That sort of thing is totally foreign to my better
self.

RELLING

[To GREGERS] It comes over him like a sort of
possession, and then I have to go out on the loose
with him Mr Molvik is dæmonic, you see

GREGERS

Dæmonic ?

RELLING.

Molvik is dæmonic, yes

GREGERS

H'm.

RELLING

And dæmonic natures are not made to walk
straight through the world, they must meander
a little now and then — Well, so you still stick up
there at those horrible grimy works ?

GREGERS.

I have stuck there until now

RELLING.

And did you ever manage to collect that claim
you went about presenting ?

GREGERS

Claim ? [*Understands him*] Ah, I see.

HIALMAR

Have you been presenting claims, Gregeis ?

GREGERS

Oh, nonsense

RELLING

Faith, but he has, though ! He went round to all the cottars' cabins presenting something he called "the claim of the ideal"

GREGERS.

I was young then

RELLING

You're right, you were very young And as for the claim of the ideal—you never got it honoured while *I* was up there

GREGERS

Nor since either

RELLING.

Ah, then you've learnt to knock a little discount off, I expect

GREGERS

Never, when I have a true man to deal with,

HIALMAR.

No, I should think not, indeed A little butter
Gina.

RELLING

And a slice of bacon for Molvik.

MOLVIK

Ugh ' not bacon ! [*A knock at the garret door.*

HIALMAR.

Open the door, Hedvig, father wants to come out.

[HEDVIG goes over and opens the door a little way, EKDAL enters with a fresh rabbit-skin, she closes the door after him]

EKDAL

Good morning, gentlemen! Good sport to-day. Shot a big one.

HIALMAR.

And you've gone and skinned it without waiting for me——!

EKDAL

Salted it too. It's good tender meat, is rabbit, it's sweet, it tastes like sugar. Good appetite to you, gentlemen! [Goes into his room]

MOLVIK

[Rising] Excuse me——, I can't——, I must get downstairs immediately——

RELLING

Drink some soda water, man!

MOLVIK

[Hurrying away] Ugh—ugh!
[Goes out by the passage door]

RELLING.

[To HIALMAR.] Let us drain a glass to the old hunter

HIALMAR.

[Clinks glasses with him] To the undaunted sportsman who has looked death in the face!

RELLING

To the grey-haired—— [*Drinks*] By-the-bye,
is his hair grey or white?

HIALMAR

Something between the two, I fancy, for that
matter, he has very few hairs left of any colour.

RELLING

Well well, one can get through the world with
a wig. After all, you are a happy man, Ekdal;
you have your noble mission to labour for——

HIALMAR

And I do labour, I can tell you

RELLING.

And then you have your excellent wife, shuffling
quietly in and out in her felt slippers, with that
see-saw walk of hers, and making everything cosy
and comfortable about you

HIALMAR

Yes, Gina—— [*Nods to her*]—you are a good help-
mate on the path of life.

GINA

Oh, don't sit there cricketizing me

RELLING

And your Hedvig too, Ekdal!

HIALMAR

[*Affected*] The child, yes! The child before
everything! Hedvig, come here to me [*Strokes*
her hair] What day is it to-morrow, eh?

HEDVIG.

[*Shaking him*] Oh no, you're not to say anything, father

HIALMAR

It cuts me to the heart when I think what a poor affair it will be, only a little festivity in the garret——

HEDVIG

Oh, but that's just what I like!

RELLING

Just you wait till the wonderful invention sees the light, Hedvig!

HIALMAR.

Yes indeed—then you shall see——! Hedvig, I have resolved to make your future secure. You shall live in comfort all your days. I will demand—something or other—on your behalf. That shall be the poor inventor's sole reward.

HEDVIG

[*Whispering, with her arms round his neck.*] Oh you dear, kind father!

RELLING.

[*To GREGERS*] Come now, don't you find it pleasant, for once in a way, to sit at a well-spread table in a happy family circle?

HIALMAR

Ah yes, I really prize these social hours.

GREGERS

For my part, I don't thrive in marsh vapours.

RELLING.

Marsh vapours ?

HIALMAR

Oh, don't begin with that stuff again !

GINA

Goodness knows there's no vapours in this house, Mr Werle, I give the place a good airing every blessed day

GREGERS

[*Leaves the table*] No airing you can give will drive out the taint I mean

HIALMAR.

Taint !

GINA

Yes, what do you say to that, Ekdal !

RELLING.

Excuse me—may it not be you yourself that have brought the taint from those mines up there ?

GREGERS

It is like you to call what I bring into this house a taint.

RELLING.

[*Goes up to him*] Look here, Mr Werle, junior. I have a strong suspicion that you are still carrying about that "claim of the ideal" large as life, in your coat-tail pocket

GREGERS.

I carry it in my breast

RELLING

Well, wherever you carry it, I advise you not to come dunning us with it here, so long as *I* am on the premises

GREGERS.

And if I do so none the less?

RELLING

Then you'll go head-foremost down the stairs ; now I've warned you

HIALMAR.

[*Rising*] Oh, but Relling——!

GREGERS

Yes, you may turn me out——

GINA

[*Interposing between them*] We can't have that, Relling But I must say, Mr. Werle, it ill becomes you to talk about vapours and taints, after all the mess you made with your stove.

[*A knock at the passage door.*]

HEDVIG.

Mother, there's somebody knocking.

HIALMAR.

There now, we're going to have a whole lot of people!

GINA.

I'll go—— [*Goes over and opens the door, starts, and draws back*] Oh—oh dear!

WERLE, in a fur coat, advances one step into the room.

WERLE

Excuse me ; but I think my son is staying here

GINA.

[*With a gulp*] Yes

HIALMAR.

[*Approaching him*] Won't you do us the honour
to—— ?

WERLE

Thank you, I merely wish to speak to my son.

GREGERS

What is it ? Here I am

WERLE

I want a few words with you, in your room

GREGERS

In my room ? Very well—— [*About to go.*

GINA

No, no, your room's not in a fit state——

WERLE

Well then, out in the passage here ; I want to
have a few words with you alone.

HIALMAR

You can have them here, sir Come into the
parlour, Relling

[*HIALMAR and RELLING go off to the right*
GINA takes HEDVIG with her into the
kitchen

GREGERS

[*After a short pause*] Well, now we are alone.

WERLE

From something you let fall last evening, and from your coming to lodge with the Ekdals, I can't help inferring that you intend to make yourself unpleasant to me, in one way or another

GREGERS

I intend to open Hjalmar Ekdal's eyes. He shall see his position as it really is—that is all

WERLE

Is that the mission in life you spoke of yesterday?

GREGERS

Yes. You have left me no other

WERLE

Is it I, then, that have crippled your mind, Gregers?

GREGERS

You have crippled my whole life. I am not thinking of all that about mother — But it's thanks to you that I am continually haunted and harassed by a guilty conscience

WERLE.

Indeed! It is your conscience that troubles you, is it?

GREGERS.

I ought to have taken a stand against you when the trap was set for Lieutenant Ekdal. I ought

to have cautioned him, for I had a misgiving as to what was in the wind

WERLE

Yes, that was the time to have spoken.

GREGERS

I did not dare to, I was so cowed and spiritless
I was mortally afraid of you—not only then, but
long afterwards

WERLE.

You have got over that fear now, it appears

GREGERS

Yes, fortunately The wrong done to old Ekdal,
both by me and by—others, can never be undone,
but Hjalmar I can rescue from all the falsehood
and deception that are bringing him to ruin

WERLE

Do you think that will be doing him a kindness?

GREGERS.

I have not the least doubt of it

WERLE

You think our worthy photographer is the sort
of man to appreciate such friendly offices?

GREGERS

Yes, I do

WERLE

H'm—we shall see.

GREGERS

Besides, if I am to go on living, I must try to find some cure for my sick conscience.

WERLE

It will never be sound Your conscience has been sickly from childhood That is a legacy from your mother, Gregers—the only one she left you

GREGERS.

[*With a scornful half-smile*] Have you not yet forgiven her for the mistake you made in supposing she would bring you a fortune?

WERLE

Don't let us wander from the point.—Then you hold to your purpose of setting young Ekdal upon what you imagine to be the right scent?

GREGERS.

Yes, that is my fixed resolve.

WERLE

Well, in that case I might have spared myself this visit; for of course it is useless to ask whether you will return home with me?

GREGERS

Quite useless.

WERLE

And I suppose you won't enter the firm either?

GREGERS.

No

WERLE

Very good But as I am thinking of marrying again, your share in the property will fall to you at once.¹

GREGERS

[*Quickly*] No, I do not want that.

WERLE.

You don't want it ?

GREGERS

No, I dare not take it, for conscience' sake.

WERLE

[*After a pause*] Are you going up to the works again ?

GREGERS

No, I consider myself released from your service

WERLE

But what are you going to do ?

GREGERS

Only to fulfil my mission, nothing more.

WERLE

Well, but afterwards ? What are you going to live upon ?

GREGERS

I have laid by a little out of my salary.

¹ By Norwegian law, before a widower can marry again, a certain proportion of his property must be settled on his children by his former marriage

WERLE

How long will that last ?

GREGERS.

I think it will last my time

WERLE

What do you mean ?

GREGERS.

I shall answer no more questions.

WERLE

Good-bye then, Gregeis.

GREGERS.

Good-bye.

[WERLE goes.

HIALMAR.

[Peeping in] He's gone, isn't he ?

GREGERS.

Yes

HIALMAR and RELLING enter , also GINA and
HEDVIG from the kitchen.

RELLING

That luncheon-party was a failure.

GREGERS.

Put on your coat, Hialmar ; I want you to come
for a long walk with me.

HIALMAR.

With pleasure What was it your father wanted ?
Had it anything to do with me ?

GREGERS

Come along We must have a talk I'll go
and put on my overcoat

'Goes out by the passage door

GINA

You shouldn't go out with him, Ekdal

RELLING.

No, don't you do it Stay where you are

HIALMAR

[Gets his hat and overcoat] Oh, nonsense ! When
a friend of my youth feels impelled to open his
mind to me in private——

RELLING

But devil take it—don't you see that the fellow's
mad, cracked, demented !

GINA

There, what did I tell you ! His mother before
him had crazy fits like that sometimes

HIALMAR

The more need for a friend's watchful eye.
[To GINA] Be sure you have dinner ready in
good time. Good-bye for the present

[Goes out by the passage door

RELLING.

It's a thousand pities the fellow didn't go to
hell through one of the Hoidal mines

GINA.

Good Lord ! what makes you say that ? !

RELLING.

[*Muttering*] Oh, I have my own reasons.

GINA

Do you think young Werle is really mad?

RELLING

No, worse luck; he's no madder than most other people. But one disease he has certainly got in his system.

GINA

What is it that's the matter with him?

RELLING

Well, I'll tell you, Mrs Ekdal. He is suffering from an acute attack of integrity.

GINA.

Integrity?

HEDVIG.

Is that a kind of disease?

RELLING

Yes, it's a national disease, but it only appears sporadically. [*Nods to GINA*] Thanks for your hospitality.

[*He goes out by the passage door.*]

GINA.

[*Moving restlessly to and fro*] Ugh, that Gregers Werle—he was always a wretched creature.

HEDVIG

[*Standing by the table, and looking searchingly at her.*] I think all this is very strange.

ACT FOURTH.

HIALMAR EKDAL'S studio *A photograph has just been taken, a camera with the cloth over it, a pedestal, two chairs, a folding table, etc., are standing out in the room. Afternoon light, the sun is going down, a little later it begins to grow dusk.*

GINA *stands in the passage doorway, with a little box and a wet glass plate in her hand, and is speaking to somebody outside*

GINA

Yes, certainly. When I make a promise I keep it. The first dozen shall be ready on Monday. Good afternoon.

[Some one is heard going downstairs. GINA shuts the door, slips the plate into the box, and puts it into the covered camera.]

HEDVIG

[Comes in from the kitchen.] Are they gone?

GINA

[Tidying up.] Yes, thank goodness, I've got rid of them at last.

HEDVIG

But can you imagine why father hasn't come home yet?

GINA

Are you sure he's not down in Relling's room?

HEDVIG

No, he's not, I ran down the kitchen stair just now and asked.

GINA

And his dinner standing and getting cold, too.

HEDVIG.

Yes, I can't understand it Father's always so careful to be home to dinner !

GINA.

Oh, he'll be here directly, you'll see

HEDVIG

I wish he would come; everything seems so queer to-day

GINA.

[*Calls out*] There he is !

HIALMAR EKDAL *comes in at the passage door.*

HEDVIG

[*Going to him*] Father ! Oh what a time we've been waiting for you !

GINA

[*Glancing sidelong at him*] You've been out a long time, Ekdal.

HIALMAR.

[*Without looking at her*] Rather long, yes.

[*He takes off his overcoat, GINA and HEDVIG go to help him; he motions them away*

GINA.

Perhaps you've had dinner with Werle?

HIALMAR

[*Hanging up his coat*] No

GINA

[*Going towards the kitchen door*] Then I'll bring some in for you

HIALMAR

No, let the dinner alone I want nothing to eat

HEDVIG

[*Going nearer to him*] Are you not well, father?

HIALMAR

Well? Oh yes, well enough We have had a tiring walk, Gregeis and I.

GINA

You didn't ought to have gone so far, Ekdal you're not used to it

HIALMAR

H'm, there's many a thing a man must get used to in this world [*Wanders about the room*] Has any one been here whilst I was out?

GINA

Nobody but the two sweethearts.

HIALMAR

No new orders?

GINA

No, not to-day

HEDVIG

There will be some to-morrow, father, you'll see

HIALMAR

I hope there will, for to-morrow I am going to set to work in real earnest

HEDVIG.

To-morrow ! Don't you remember what day it is to-morrow ?

HIALMAR

Oh yes, by-the-bye—— Well, the day after, then Henceforth I mean to do everything myself, I shall take all the work into my own hands

GINA

Why, what can be the good of that, Ekdal ? It'll only make your life a burden to you I can manage the photography all right, and you can go on working at your invention

HEDVIG

And think of the wild duck, father,—and all the hens and rabbits and——'

HIALMAR.

Don't talk to me of all that trash ! From to-morrow I will never set foot in the garret again

HEDVIG

Oh but, father, you promised that we should have a little party——

HIALMAR.

H'm, true Well then, from the day after to-morrow I should almost like to wring that cursed wild duck's neck !

HEDVIG.

[*Shrinks*] The wild duck !

GINA

Well I never !

HEDVIG

[*Shaking him*] Oh no, father, you know it's my wild duck !

HIALMAR

That is why I don't do it I haven't the heart to—for your sake, Hedvig But in my inmost soul I feel that I ought to do it I ought not to tolerate under my roof a creature that has been through those hands

GINA

Why, good gracious, even if grandfather did get it from that poor creature, Pettersen——

HIALMAR.

[*Wandering about*] There are certain claims—what shall I call them ?—let me say claims of the ideal—certain obligations, which a man cannot disregard without injury to his soul

HEDVIG

[*Going after him*] But think of the wild duck, —the poor wild duck !

HIALMAR.

[*Stops*] I tell you I will spare it—for your sake. Not a hair of its head shall be—I mean, it shall be spared There are greater problems than that to be dealt with But you should go out a little now, Hedvig, as usual, it is getting dusk enough for you now.

HEDVIG,

No, I don't care about going out now.

HIALMAR

Yes do, it seems to me your eyes are blinking a great deal, all these vapours in here are bad for you. The air is heavy under this roof.

HEDVIG

Very well then, I'll run down the kitchen stair and go for a little walk. My cloak and hat?—oh, they're in my own room. Father—be sure you don't do the wild duck any harm whilst I'm out.

HIALMAR.

Not a feather of its head shall be touched
[*Draws her to him*] You and I, Hedvig—we two
—— ' Well, go along

[*HEDVIG nods to her parents and goes out through the kitchen*]

HIALMAR

[*Walks about without looking up*] Gina

GINA.

Yes?

HIALMAR

From to-morrow—or, say, from the day after to-morrow—I should like to keep the household account-book myself.

GINA.

Do you want to keep the accounts too, now?"

HIALMAR

Yes; or to check the receipts at any rate.

GINA.

Lord help us! that's soon done.

HIALMAR

One would hardly think so, at any rate you seem to make the money go a very long way [*Stops and looks at her*] How do you manage it?

GINA

It's because me and Hedvig, we need so little

HIALMAR

Is it the case that father is very liberally paid for the copying he does for Mr Werle?

GINA.

I don't know as he gets anything out of the way
I don't know the rates for that sort of work

HIALMAR

Well, what does he get, about? Let me hear!

GINA

Oh, it varies, I daresay it'll come to about as much as he costs us, with a little pocket-money over

HIALMAR

As much as he costs us! And you have never told me this before!

GINA

No, how could I tell you? It pleased you so much to think he got everything from you

HIALMAR

And he gets it from Mr Werle

GINA

Oh well, he has plenty and to spare, he has.

HIALMAR

Light the lamp for me, please !

GINA

[*Lighting the lamp*] And of course we don't know as it's Mr Weile himself, it may be Giaberg——

HIALMAR.

Why attempt such an evasion ?

GINA

I don't know ; I only thought——

HIALMAR

H'm !

GINA

It wasn't me that got grandfather that copying
It was Bertha, when she used to come about us

HIALMAR

It seems to me your voice is trembling

GINA

[*Putting the lamp-shade on*] Is it ?

HIALMAR

And your hands are shaking, are they not ?

GINA.

[*Firmly*] Come right out with it, Ekdal. What has he been saying about me ?

HIALMAR

Is it true—can it be true that—that there was an—an understanding between you and Mr. Weile. while you were in service there ?

GINA

That's not true Not at that time Mr Werle did come after me, that's a fact And his wife thought there was something in it, and then she made such a hocus-pocus and hurly-burly, and she hustled me and bustled me about so, that I left her service

HIALMAR

But afterwards, then ?

GINA

Well, then I went home And mother—well, she wasn't the woman you took her for, Ekdal, she kept on worrying and worrying at me about one thing and another—for Mr Werle was a widower by that time.

HIALMAR.

Well, and then ?

GINA

I suppose you've got to know it. He gave me no peace until he'd had his way

HIALMAR

[*Striking his hands together*] And this is the mother of my child ! How could you hide this from me ?

GINA

•Yes, it was wrong of me, I ought certainly to have told you long ago

HIALMAR

You should have told me at the very first,—then I should have known the sort of woman you were

GINA

But would you have married me all the same ?

HIALMAR

How can you dream that I would ?

GINA

That's just why I didn't dare tell you anything, then For I'd come to care for you so much, you see, and I couldn't go and make myself utterly miserable——

HIALMAR

[*Walks about*] And this is my Hedvig's mother And to know that all I see before me—[*Kicks at a chair*]*—all that I call my home—I owe to a favoured predecessor ! Oh that scoundrel Werle !*

GINA

Do you repent of the fourteen—the fifteen years as we've lived together ?

HIALMAR

[*Placing himself in front of her*] Have you not every day, every hour, repented of the spider's-web of deceit you have spun around me ? Answer me that ! How could you help wincing with penitence and remorse ?

GINA

Oh, my dear Ekdal, I've had all I could do to look after the house and get through the day's work——

HIALMAR

Then you never think of reviewing your past ?

GINA

No, Heaven knows I'd almost forgotten those old stories

HIALMAR

Oh, this dull, callous contentment! To me there is something revolting about it Think of it—never so much as a twinge of remorse!

GINA

But tell me, Ekdal—what would have become of you if you hadn't had a wife like me?

HIALMAR.

Like you——!

GINA

Yes, for you know I've always been a bit more practical and wide-awake than you Of course I'm a year or two older.

HIALMAR

What would have become of me!

GINA

You'd got into all sorts of bad ways when first you met me, that you can't deny

HIALMAR

"Bad ways" do you call them? Little do you know what a man goes through when he is in grief and despair—especially a man of my fiery temperament.

GINA

Well, well, that may be so And I've no reason to crow over you, neither, for you turned a moral

of a husband, that you did, as soon as ever you had a house and home of your own—And now we'd got everything so nice and cosy about us, and me and Hedvig was just thinking we'd soon be able to let ourselves go a bit, in the way of both food and clothes

HIALMAR.

In the swamp of deceit, yes.

GINA

I wish to goodness that detestable being had never set his foot inside our doors !

HIALMAR.

And I, too, thought my home such a pleasant one That was a delusion ! Where shall I now find the elasticity of spirit to bring my invention into the world of reality ? Perhaps it will die with me ; and then it will be your past, Gina, that will have killed it.

GINA.

[*Nearly crying*] You mustn't say such things, Ekdal Me, that has only wanted to do the best I could for you, all my days !

HIALMAR.

I ask you, what becomes of the breadwinner's dream ? When I used to lie in there on the sofa and brood over my invention, I had a clear enough presentiment that it would sap my vitality to the last drop I felt even then that, the day when I held the patent in my hand—that day—would bring my—release. And then it was my

dream that you should live on after me, the dead inventor's well-to-do widow

GINA

[*Drying her tears*] No, you mustn't talk like that, Ekdal May the Lord never let me see the day I am left a widow !

HIALMAR

Oh, the whole dream has vanished It is all over now All over !

GREGERS WERLE *opens the passage door cautiously and looks in*

GREGERS

May I come in ?

HIALMAR.

Yes, come in

GREGERS

[*Comes forward, his face beaming with satisfaction, and holds out both his hands to them*] Well, dear friends—— ! [*Looks from one to the other, and whispers to HIALMAR*] Have you not done it yet ?

HIALMAR

[*Aloud*] It is done.

GREGERS

*It is ?

HIALMAR

I have passed through the bitterest moments of my life

GREGERS

But, also, I trust, the most ennobling

HIALMAR

Well, at any rate, we have got through it for the present.

GINA

God forgive you, Mr Werle

GREGERS

[*In great surprise*] But I don't understand this.

HIALMAR

What don't you understand?

GREGERS

After so great a crisis—a crisis that is to be the starting-point of an entirely new life—of a communion founded on truth, and free from all taint of deception——

HIALMAR

Yes yes, I know, I know that quite well

GREGERS

I confidently expected, when I entered the room, to find the light of transfiguration shining upon me from both husband and wife. And now I see nothing but dulness, oppression, gloom——

GINA.

Oh, is that it? [*Takes off the lamp-shade.*]

GREGERS

You will not understand me, Mrs. Ekdal Ah well, you, I suppose, need time to—— But you, Hialmar? Surely you feel a new consecration after the great crisis.

HIALMAR

Yes, of course I do That is—in a sort of way.

GREGERS

For surely nothing in the world can compare with the joy of forgiving one who has erred, and raising her up to oneself in love

HIALMAR

Do you think a man can so easily throw off the effects of the bitter cup I have drained ?

GREGERS

No, not a common man, perhaps But a man like you——'

HIALMAR

Good God ! I know that well enough But you must keep me up to it, Giegers It takes time, you know

GREGERS

You have much of the wild duck in you, Hialmar

RELLING has come in at the passage door

RELLING

Oho ! is the wild duck to the fore again ?

HIALMAR

• Yes, Mr Werle's wing-broken victim

RELLING

Mr. Werle's—— ? So it's him you are talking about ?

HIALMAR.

Him and—ourselves

RELLING

[*In an undertone to GREGERS*] May the devil fly away with you !

HIALMAR

What is that you are saying ?

RELLING

Only uttering a heartfelt wish that this quack-salver would take himself off. If he stays here, he is quite equal to making an utter mess of life, for both of you.

GREGERS.

These two will not make a mess of life, Mr. Relling. Of course I won't speak of Hialmar—him we know. But she, too, in her innermost heart, has certainly something loyal and sincere——

GINA

[*Almost crying*] You might have let me alone for what I was, then.

RELLING.

[*To GREGERS*] Is it rude to ask what you really want in this house ?

GREGERS.

To lay the foundations of a true marriage.

RELLING

So you don't think Ekdal's marriage is good enough as it is ?

GREGERS.

No doubt it is as good a marriage as most others, worse luck. But a true marriage it has yet to become.

HIALMAR

You have never had eyes for the claims of the ideal, Relling

RELLING

Rubbish, my boy!—But excuse me, Mr Weile how many—in round numbers—how many true marriages have you seen in the course of your life ?

GREGERS

Scarcely a single one

RELLING.

Nor I either

GREGERS

But I have seen innumerable marriages of the opposite kind And it has been my fate to see at close quarters what ruin such a marriage can work in two human souls

HIALMAR.

A man's whole moral basis may give away beneath his feet, that is the terrible part of it

RELLING

Well, I can't say I've ever been exactly married, so I don't pretend to speak with authority But this I know, that the child enters into the marriage problem. And you must leave the child in peace.

HIALMAR

Oh—Hedvig ! my poor Hedvig !

RELLING

Yes, you must be good enough to keep Hedvig outside of all this You two are grown-up people, you are free, in God's name, to make what mess

and muddle you please of your life But you must deal cautiously with Hedvig, I tell you, else you may do her a great injury

HIALMAR.

An injury!

RELLING

Yes, or she may do herself an injury—and perhaps others too

GINA

How can you know that, Relling?

HIALMAR

Her sight is in no immediate danger, is it?

RELLING

I am not talking about her sight. Hedvig is at a critical age. She may be getting all sorts of mischief into her head

GINA.

That's true—I've noticed it already! She's taken to carrying on with the fire, out in the kitchen. She calls it playing at house-on-fire. I'm often scared for fear she really sets fire to the house.

RELLING.

You see, I thought as much

GREGERS

[To RELLING] But how do you account for that?

RELLING.

[*Sullenly.*] Her constitution's changing, sir.

HIALMAR

So long as the child has me——' So long as
I am above ground——' [*A knock at the door*]

GINA

Hush, Ekdal, there's some one in the passage
[*Calls out.*] Come in '

[*MRS. SORBY, in walking dress, comes in*]

MRS SORBY

Good evening

GINA

[*Going towards her*] Is it really you, Bertha ?

MRS SORBY

Yes, of course it is But I'm disturbing you,
I'm afraid ?

HIALMAR

No, not at all, an emissary from that house——

MRS SORBY

[*To GINA*] To tell the truth, I hoped your
men-folk would be out at this time I just ran
up to have a little chat with you, and to say good-
bye

GINA

Good-bye ? Are you going away, then ?

MRS SORBY

Yes, to-morrow morning,—up to Hoidal Mr.
Weile started this afternoon [*Lightly to GREGERS*]
He asked me to say good-bye for him

GINA

Only fancy——'

HIALMAR

So Mr Weile has gone ? And now you are going after him ?

MRS SORBY

Yes, what do you say to that, Ekdal ?

HIALMAR

I say beware !

GREGERS

I must explain the situation. My father and Mrs Sorby are going to be married

HIALMAR.

Going to be married !

GINA.

Oh Bertha ! So it's come to that at last !

RELLING.

[*His voice quivering a little*] This is surely not true ?

MRS SORBY.

Yes, my dear Relling, it's true enough.

RELLING.

You are going to marry again ?

MRS SORBY.

Yes, it looks like it. Werle has got a special licence, and we are going to be married quite quietly, up at the works

GREGERS.

Then I must wish you all happiness, like a dutiful stepson.

MRS SORBY

Thank you very much—if you mean what you say I certainly hope it will lead to happiness, both for Werle and for me

RELLING

You have every reason to hope that Mr Werle never gets drunk—so far as I know, and I don't suppose he's in the habit of thrashing his wives, like the late lamented horse-doctor

MRS SORBY.

Come now, let Sorby rest in peace He had his good points too

RELLING

Mr Werle has better ones, I have no doubt.

MRS SORBY

He hasn't frittered away all that was good in him, at any rate The man who does that must take the consequences

RELLING

I shall go out with Molvik this evening

MRS SORBY

You musn't do that, Relling Don't do it—for my sake

RELLING

There's nothing else for it [To HIALMAR]
If you're going with us, come along

GINA

No, thank you Ekdal doesn't go in for that sort of dissertation.

HIALMAR

[*Half aloud, in vexation*] Oh, do hold your tongue!

RELLING

Good-bye, Mrs.—Werle

[*Goes out through the passage door*]

GREGERS

[*To Mrs Sorby*] You seem to know Dr Relling pretty intimately

MRS SORBY

Yes, we have known each other for many years. At one time it seemed as if things might have gone further between us.

GREGERS

It was surely lucky for you that they did not.

MRS. SORBY

You may well say that. But I have always been wary of acting on impulse. A woman can't afford absolutely to throw herself away.

GREGERS

Are you not in the least afraid that I may let my father know about this old friendship?

MRS SORBY

Why, of course I have told him all about it myself.

GREGERS

Indeed?

MRS SORBY.

Your father knows every single thing that can,

with any truth, he said about me I have told him all, it was the first thing I did when I saw what was in his mind

GREGERS

Then you have been franker than most people, I think

MRS SORBY

I have always been frank We women find that the best policy

HIALMAR

What do you say to that, Gina?

GINA

Oh, we're not all alike, us women aren't Some are made one way, some another

MRS SORBY

Well, for my part, Gina, I believe it's wisest to do as I've done And Werle has no secrets either, on his side That's really the great bond between us, you see Now he can talk to me as openly as a child. He has never had the chance to do that before Fancy a man like him, full of health and vigour, passing his whole youth and the best years of his life in listening to nothing but penitential sermons! And very often the sermons had for their text the most imaginary offences—at least so I understand.

GINA.

That's true enough

GREGERS

If you ladies are going to follow up this topic, I had better withdraw.

MRS SORBY

You can stay so far as that's concerned I shan't say a word more But I wanted you to know that I had done nothing secretly or in an underhand way I may seem to have come in for a great piece of luck, and so I have, in a sense But after all, I don't think I am getting any more than I am giving I shall stand by him always, and I can tend and care for him as no one else can, now that he is getting helpless

HIALMAR.

Getting helpless?

GREGERS.

[To MRS SORBY.] Hush, don't speak of that here

MRS SORBY.

There is no disguising it any longer, however much he would like to He is going blind

HIALMAR

[Starts] Going blind? That's strange. He too going blind?

GINA.

Lots of people do

MRS. SORBY.

And you can imagine what that means to a business man Well, I shall try as well as I can to make my eyes take the place of his But I musn't stay any longer; I have such heaps of things to do — Oh, by-the-bye, Ekdal, I was to tell you that if there is anything Werle can do for you, you must just apply to Gråberg.

GREGERS

That offer I am sure Hjalmar Ekdal will decline with thanks

MRS SORBY

Indeed ? I don't think he used to be so——

GINA.

No, Bertha, Ekdal doesn't need anything from Mr Werle now.

HIALMAR

[*Slowly, and with emphasis*] Will you present my compliments to your future husband, and say that I intend very shortly to call upon Mr Gråberg——

GREGERS

What ! You don't really mean that ?

HIALMAR

To call upon Mr Gråberg, I say, and obtain an account of the sum I owe his principal I will pay that debt of honour—ha ha ha ! a debt of honour, let us call it ! In any case, I will pay the whole, with five per cent interest

GINA

But, my dear Ekdal, God knows we haven't got the money to do it

HIALMAR

Be good enough to tell your future husband that I am working assiduously at my invention. Please tell him that what sustains me in this laborious task is the wish to free myself from a torturing burden of debt. That is my reason for proceeding with the invention. The entire profits

shall be devoted to releasing me from my pecuniary obligations to your future husband

MRS SORBY

Something has happened here.

HIALMAR.

Yes, you are right

MRS SORBY

Well, good-bye I had something else to speak to you about, Gina ; but it must keep till another time Good-bye

[HIALMAR and GREGERS bow silently GINA follows MRS SORBY to the door.

HIALMAR

Not beyond the threshold, Gina !

[MRS SORBY goes, GINA shuts the door after her

HIALMAR

There now, Gregers ; I have got that burden of debt off my mind

GREGERS.

You soon will, at all events.

HIALMAR

I think my attitude may be called correct.

GREGERS

You are the man I have always taken you for.

HIALMAR

In certain cases, it is impossible to disregard the claim of the ideal. Yet, as the breadwinner

of a family, I cannot but writhe and groan under it I can tell you it is no joke for a man without capital to attempt the repayment of a long-standing obligation, over which, so to speak, the dust of oblivion had gathered But it cannot be helped : the Man in me demands his rights

GREGERS

[*Laying his hand on HIALMAR's shoulder*] My dear Hialmar—was it not a good thing I came ?

HIALMAR

Yes.

GREGERS

Are you not glad to have had your true position made clear to you ?

HIALMAR

[*Somewhat impatiently*] Yes, of course I am But there is one thing that is revolting to my sense of justice

GREGERS.

And what is that ?

HIALMAR

It is that—but I don't know whether I ought to express myself so unreservedly about your father

GREGERS

Say what you please, so far as I am concerned

HIALMAR

Well then, is it not exasperating to think that it is not I, but he, who will realise the true marriage ?

GREGERS

How can you say such a thing ?

HIALMAR

Because it is clearly the case Isn't the marriage between you and father and Miss Soiby founded upon complete confidence, upon entire and unreserved candour on both sides? They hide nothing from each other, they keep no secrets in the background; then relation is based, if I may put it so, on mutual confession and absolution

GREGERS

Well, what then?

HIALMAR.

Well, is not that the whole thing? Did you not yourself say that this was precisely the difficulty that had to be overcome in order to found a true marriage?

GREGERS

But this is a totally different matter, Hialmar. You surely don't compare either yourself or your wife with those two——? Oh, you understand me well enough.

HIALMAR.

Say what you like, there is something in all this that hurts and offends my sense of justice. It really looks as if there were no just providence to rule the world

GINA

Oh no, Ekdal, for God's sake don't say such things

GREGERS.

H'm; don't let us get upon those questions.

HIALMAR

And yet, after all, I cannot but recognise the guiding finger of fate He is going blind.

GINA

Oh, you can't be sure of that.

HIALMAR

There is no doubt about it At all events there ought not to be ; for in that very fact lies the righteous retribution He has hoodwinked a confiding fellow creature in days gone by——

GREGERS

I fear he has hoodwinked many.

HIALMAR.

And now comes inexorable, mysterious Fate, and demands Werle's own eyes

GINA

Oh, how dare you say such dreadful things ! You make me quite scared

HIALMAR

It is profitable, now and then, to plunge deep into the night side of existence

HEDVIG, *in her hat and cloak, comes in by the passage door. She is pleasurably excited, and out of breath.*

GINA

Are you back already ?

HEDVIG

Yes, I didn't care to go any farther! It was a good thing, too, for I've just met some one at the door

HIALMAR

It must have been that Miss Sorby

HEDVIG

Yes.

HIALMAR

[*Walks up and down*] I hope you have seen her for the last time

[*Silence* HEDVIG, discouraged, looks first at one and then at the other, trying to divine their frame of mind

HEDVIG

[*Approaching, coaxingly*] Father.

HIALMAR

Well—what is it, Hedvig?

HEDVIG

Mrs Sorby had something with her for me.

HIALMAR.

[*Stops*] For you?

HEDVIG.

Yes. Something for to-morrow.

GINA.

Bertha has always given you some little thing on your birthday

HIALMAR.

What is it?

HEDVIG

Oh, you mustn't see it now Mother is to give
it to me to-morrow morning before I'm up

HIALMAR

What is all this hocus-pocus that I am to be
kept in the dark about !

HEDVIG

[*Quickly*] Oh no, you may see it if you like
It's a big letter

[*Takes the letter out of her cloak pocket.*]

HIALMAR.

A letter too ?

HEDVIG

Yes, it is only a letter The rest will come
afterwards, I suppose But fancy—a letter ! I've
never had a letter before And there's "Miss"
written upon it [Reads] "Miss Hedvig Ekdal."
Only fancy—that's me !

HIALMAR.

Let me see that letter

HEDVIG

[*Hands it to him.*] There it is.

HIALMAR.

That is Mr Werle's hand.

GINA.

Are you sure of that, Ekdal ?

HIALMAR.

Look for yourself.

GINA

Oh, what do *I* know about such-like things ?

HIALMAR

Hedvig, may I open the letter—and read it ?

HEDVIG

Yes, of course you may, if you want to.

GINA.

No, not to-night, Ekdal, it's to be kept till to-morrow

HEDVIG.

[*Softly*] Oh, can't you let him read it ! It's sure to be something good, and then father will be glad, and everything will be nice again

HIALMAR

I may open it then ?

HEDVIG.

Yes do, father I'm so anxious to know what it is

HIALMAR

Well and good [*Opens the letter, takes out a paper, reads it through, and appears bewildered*] What is this—— !

GINA.

What does it say ?

HEDVIG.

Oh yes, father—tell us !

HIALMAR

Be quiet [*Reads it through again ; he has turned*

pale, but says with self-control] It is a deed of gift, Hedvig.

HEDVIG

Is it? What sort of gift am I to have?

HIALMAR

Read for yourself

[*HEDVIG goes over and reads for a time by the lamp*

HIALMAR.

[*Half-aloud, clenching his hands*] The eyes! The eyes—and then that letter!

HEDVIG

[*Leaves off reading*] Yes, but it seems to me that it's grandfather that's to have it

HIALMAR

[*Takes the letter from her*] Gina—can you understand this?

GINA

I know nothing whatever about it, tell me what's the matter

HIALMAR

Mr Werle writes to Hedvig that her old grandfather need not trouble himself any longer with the copying, but that he can henceforth draw on the office for a hundred crowns a month——

GREGERS

Aha!

HEDVIG

A hundred crowns, mother! I read that

GINA.

What a good thing for grandfather !

HIALMAR

—a hundred crowns a month so long as he needs it—that means, of course, so long as he lives.

GINA

Well, so he's provided for, poor dear.

HIALMAR

But there is more to come. You didn't read that, Hedvig. Afterwards this gift is to pass on to you.

HEDVIG.

To me ! The whole of it ?

HIALMAR

He says that the same amount is assured to you for the whole of your life. Do you hear that, Gina ?

GINA.

Yes, I hear.

HEDVIG

Fancy—all that money for me ! [*Shakes him*] Father, father, aren't you glad—— ?

HIALMAR

[*Eluding her*] Glad ! [*Walks about*] Oh what vistas—what perspectives open up before me ! It is Hedvig, Hedvig that he showers these benefactions upon !

GINA.

Yes, because it's Hedvig's birthday——

HEDVIG

And you'll get it all the same, father ! You know quite well I shall give all the money to you and mother.

HIALMAR

To mother, yes ! There we have it.

GREGERS

Hialmar, this is a trap he is setting for you

HIALMAR

Do you think it's another trap ?

GREGERS.

When he was here this morning he said - Hialmar Ekdal is not the man you imagine him to be

HIALMAR.

Not the man—— !

GREGERS

That you shall see, he said

HIALMAR

He meant you should see that I would let myself be bought off—— !

HEDVIG.

' Oh mother, what does all this mean ?

GINA.

Go and take off your things

[HEDVIG goes out by the kitchen door, half-crying.]

GREGERS

Yes, Hjalmar—now is the time to show who was right, he or I

HIALMAR

[*Slowly tears the paper across, lays both pieces on the table, and says*] Here is my answer

GREGERS.

Just what I expected

HIALMAR

[*Goes over to GINA, who stands by the stove, and says in a low voice*] Now please make a clean breast of it. If the connection between you and him was quite over when you—came to care for me, as you call it—why did he place us in a position to marry?

GINA

I suppose he thought as he could come and go in our house.

HIALMAR

Only that? Was not he afraid of a possible contingency?

GINA

I don't know what you mean.

HIALMAR

I want to know whether—your child has the right to live under my roof.

GINA

[*Draws herself up, her eyes flash.*] You ask that!

HIALMAR.

You shall answer me this one question Does
Hedvig belong to me—or——? Well!

GINA

[*Looking at him with cold defiance*] I don't know

HIALMAR

[*Quivering a little*] You don't know!

GINA

How should I know? A creature like me——

HIALMAR

[*Quietly turning away from her*] Then I have
nothing more to do in this house

GREGERS

Take care, Hialmar! Think what you are
doing!

HIALMAR

[*Puts on his overcoat*] In this case, there is
nothing for a man like me to think twice about.

GREGERS

Yes indeed, there are endless things to be considered. You three must be together if you are to attain the true frame of mind for self-sacrifice and forgiveness

HIALMAR

I don't want to attain it. Never, never! My hat! [*Takes his hat*] My home has fallen in ruins about me. [*Bursts into tears*] Gregers, I have no child!

HEDVIG

[*Who has opened the kitchen door.*] What is that you're saying? [*Coming to him*] Father, father!

GINA.

There, you see!

HIALMAR

Don't come near me, Hedvig! Keep far away
I cannot bear to see you Oh! those eyes——!
Good-bye [*Makes for the door*]

HEDVIG

[*Clinging close to him and screaming loudly.*] No!
no! Don't leave me!

GINA.

[*Cries out*] Look at the child, Ekdal! Look
at the child!

HIALMAR.

I will not! I cannot! I must get out—away
from all this!

[*He tears himself away from HEDVIG, and
goes out by the passage door.*]

HEDVIG. •

[*With despairing eyes*] He is going away from
us, mother! He is going away from us! He will
never come back again!

GINA.

Don't cry, Hedvig. Father's sure to come back
again!

HEDVIG.

[*Throws herself sobbing on the sofa.*] No, no, he'll
never come home to us any more.

GREGERS

Do you believe I meant all for the best, Mrs Ekdal ?

GINA

Yes, I daresay you did, but God forgive you, all the same

HEDVIG

[*Lying on the sofa*] Oh, this will kill me ! What have I done to him ? Mother, you must fetch him home again !

GINA

Yes yes yes, only be quiet, and I'll go out and look for him [*Puts on her outdoor things*] Perhaps he's gone in to Relling's But you mustn't lie there and cry. Promise me !

HEDVIG

[*Weeping convulsively*] Yes, I'll stop, I'll stop ; if only father comes back !

GREGERS

[*To GINA, who is going*] After all, had you not better leave him to fight out his bitter fight to the end ?

GINA

Oh, he can do that afterwards. First of all, we must get the child quieted

[*Goes out by the passage door.*]

HEDVIG

[*Sits up and dries her tears*] Now you must tell me what all this means Why doesn't father want me any more ?

GREGERS

You mustn't ask that till you are a big gul—quite grown-up

HEDVIG.

[*Sobs*] But I can't go on being as miserable as this till I'm grown up—I think I know what it is—Perhaps I'm not really father's child

GREGERS

[*Uneasily*] How could that be?

HEDVIG.

Mother might have found me And perhaps father has just got to know it, I've read of such things.

GREGERS

Well, but if it were so——

HEDVIG.

I think he might be just as fond of me for all that Yes, fonder almost We got the wild duck in a present, you know, and I love it so dearly all the same

GREGERS

[*Turning the conversation*] Ah, the wild duck, by-the-bye! Let us talk about the wild duck a little, Hedvig.

HEDVIG.

The poor wild duck! He doesn't want to see it any more either Only think, he wanted to wring its neck!

GREGERS.

Oh, he won't do that.

HEDVIG

No, but he said he would like to. And I think it was horrid of father to say it, for I pray for the wild duck every night, and ask that it may be preserved from death and all that is evil.

GREGERS

[*Looking at her*] Do you say your prayers every night?

HEDVIG.

Yes

GREGERS

Who taught you to do that?

HEDVIG

I myself, one time when father was very ill, and had leeches on his neck, and said that death was staring him in the face.

GREGERS

Well?

HEDVIG

Then I prayed for him as I lay in bed, and since then I have always kept it up.

GREGERS

And now you pray for the wild duck too?

HEDVIG

I thought it was best to bring in the wild duck, for she was so weakly at first.

GREGERS

Do you pray in the morning, too?

HEDVIG

No, of course not

GREGERS

Why not in the morning as well ?

HEDVIG

In the morning it's light, you know, and there's nothing in particular to be afraid of

GREGERS

And your father was going to wring the neck of the wild duck that you love so dearly ?

HEDVIG

No ; he said he ought to wring its neck, but he would spare it for my sake, and that was kind of father

GREGERS

[*Coming a little nearer*] But suppose you were to sacrifice the wild duck of your own free will for his sake.

HEDVIG

[*Rising*] The wild duck !

GREGERS.

Suppose you were to make a free-will offering, for his sake, of the dearest treasure you have in the world !

HEDVIG.

Do you think that would do any good ?

GREGERS

Try it, Hedvig

HEDVIG

[*Softly, with flashing eyes*] Yes, I will try it.

GREGERS

Have you really the courage for it, do you think ?

HEDVIG

I'll ask grandfather to shoot the wild duck for me.

GREGERS

Yes, do But not a word to your mother about it.

HEDVIG

Why not ?

GREGERS

She doesn't understand us

HEDVIG

The wild duck ! I'll try it to-morrow morning
[GINA comes in by the passage door]

HEDVIG.

[*Going towards her*] Did you find him, mother

GINA

No, but I heard as he had called and taken
Relling with him

GREGERS

Are you sure of that ?

GINA

Yes, the porter's wife said so. Molvik went
with them too, she said

GREGERS

This evening, when his mind so sorely needs to
wrestle in solitude—— !

GINA

[*Takes off her things*] Yes, men are strange creatures, so they are. The Lord only knows where Relling has dragged him to! I ran over to Madam Eriksen's, but they weren't there.

HEDVIG

[*Struggling to keep back her tears*] Oh, if he should never come home any more!

GREGERS

He will come home again. I shall have news to give him to-morrow, and then you shall see how he comes home. You may rely upon that, Hedvig, and sleep in peace. Good-night.

[*He goes out by the passage door.*]

HEDVIG

[*Throws herself sobbing on GINA's neck.*] Mother, mother!

GINA

[*Pats her shoulder and sighs*] Ah yes, Relling was right, he was. That's what comes of it when crazy creatures go about presenting the claims of the—what-you-may-call-it.

ACT FIFTH.

HIALMAR EKDAL'S studio *Cold, grey, morning light
Wet snow lies upon the large panes of the sloping
roof-window*

GINA *comes from the kitchen with an apron and bib
on, and carrying a dusting-brush and a duster, she
goes towards the sitting-room door. At the same
moment HEDVIG comes hurriedly in from the
passage*

GINA

[Stops] Well?

HEDVIG.

Oh, mother, I almost think he's down at
Relling's——

GINA

There, you see!

HEDVIG

——because the porter's wife says she could
hear that Relling had two people with him when
he came home last night.

GINA

That's just what I thought.

HEDVIG

But it's no use his being there, if he won't come
up to us.

GINA

I'll go down and speak to him at all events.

OLD EKDAL, *in dressing-gown and slippers, and with a lighted pipe, appears at the door of his room.*

EKDAL

Hjalmar—— Isn't Hjalmar at home?

GINA

No, he's gone out.

EKDAL

So early? And in such a tearing snowstorm? Well well, just as he pleases, I can take my morning walk alone

[He slides the garret door aside, HEDVIG helps him, he goes in; she closes it after him.]

HEDVIG

[In an undertone] Only think, mother, when poor grandfather hears that father is going to leave us.

GINA

Oh, nonsense, grandfather mustn't hear anything about it. It was a heaven's mercy he wasn't at home yesterday in all that hurly-burly.

HEDVIG.

Yes, but——

[GREGERS comes in by the passage door]

GREGERS.

Well, have you any news of him?

GINA.

They say he's down at Relling's.

GREGERS.

At Relling's! Has he really been out with those creatures?

GINA.

Yes, like enough

GREGERS

When he ought to have been yearning for solitude, to collect and clear his thoughts——

GINA

Yes, you may well say so

RELLING *enters from the passage*

HEDVIG *

[*Going to him*] Is father in your room ?

GINA,

[*At the same time*] Is he there ?

RELLING

Yes, to be sure he is

HEDVIG

And you never let us know !

RELLING.

Yes, I'm a brute But in the first place I had to look after the other brute, I mean our dæmonic friend, of course, and then I fell so dead asleep that——

GINA

What does Ekdal say to-day ?

RELLING

He says nothing whatever.

HEDVIG.

Doesn't he speak ?

RELLING.

Not a blessed word.

GREGERS

No no; I can understand that very well.

GINA

But what's he doing then?

RELLING

He's lying on the sofa, snoring

GINA

Oh is he? Yes, Ekdal's a rare one to snore.

HEDVIG

Asleep? Can he sleep?

RELLING

Well, it certainly looks like it.

GREGERS

No wonder, after the spiritual conflict that has rent him——

GINA.

And then he's never been used to gadding about out of doors at night

HEDVIG

Perhaps it's a good thing that he's getting some sleep, mother.

GINA.

Of course it is; and we must take care we don't wake him up too early. Thank you, Relling. I must get the house cleaned up a bit now, and then—— Come and help me, Hedvig.

[GINA and HEDVIG go into the sitting-room]

GREGERS.

[Turning to RELING.] What is your explana-

tion of the spiritual tumult that is now going on in Hjalmar Ekdal ?

RELLING

Devil a bit of a spiritual tumult have *I* noticed in him

GREGERS

What ! Not at such a crisis, when his whole life has been placed on a new foundation—— ? How can you think that such an individuality as Hjalmar's—— ?

RELLING

Oh, individuality—he ! If he ever had any tendency to the abnormal developments you call individuality, I can assure you it was rooted out of him while he was still in his teens

GREGERS

That would be strange indeed,—considering the loving care with which he was brought up

RELLING

By those two high-flown, hysterical maiden aunts, you mean ?

GREGERS

Let me tell you that they were women who never forgot the claim of the ideal—but of course you will only jeer at me again

RELLING.

No, I'm in no humour for that I know all about those ladies, for he has ladled out no end of rhetoric on the subject of his "two soul-mothers" But I don't think he has much to thank them for Ekdal's misfortune is that in his

own circle he has always been looked upon as a shining light——

GREGERS

Not without reason, surely Look at the depth of his mind !

RELLING.

I have never discovered it. That his father believed in it I don't so much wonder, the old lieutenant has been an ass all his days

GREGERS

He has had a child-like mind all his days; that is what you cannot understand

RELLING

Well, so be it But then, when our dear, sweet Hjalmar went to college, he at once passed for the great light of the future amongst his comrades too ! He was handsome, the rascal—red and white—a shop-girl's dream of manly beauty; and with his superficially emotional temperament, and his sympathetic voice, and his talent for declaiming other people's verses and other people's thoughts——

GREGERS.

[*Indignantly*] Is it Hjalmar Ekdal you are talking about in this strain ?

RELLING.

Yes, with your permission, I am simply giving you an inside view of the idol you are grovelling before.

GREGERS

I should hardly have thought I was quite stone blind.

RELLING

Yes you are—or not far from it. You are a sick man, too, you see

GREGERS.

You are right there

RELLING

Yes Yours is a complicated case First of all there is that plaguy integrity-fever, and then—what's worse—you are always in a delirium of hero-worship, you must always have something to adore, outside yourself

GREGERS

Yes, I must certainly seek it outside myself.

RELLING

But you make such shocking mistakes about every new phoenix you think you have discovered Here again you have come to a cotter's cabin with your claim of the ideal, and the people of the house are insolvent

GREGERS

If you don't think better than that of Hjalmar Ekdal, what pleasure can you find in being everlastingly with him ?

RELLING

Well, you see, I'm supposed to be a sort of a doctor—save the mark! I can't but give a hand to the poor sick folk who live under the same roof with me.

GREGERS

Oh, indeed! Hjalmar Ekdal is sick too, is he!

RELLING

Most people are, worse luck

GREGERS

And what remedy are you applying in Hjalmar's case ?

RELLING

My usual one I am cultivating the life-illusion¹ in him.

GREGERS

Life—illusion ? I didn't catch what you said

RELLING

Yes, I said illusion For illusion, you know, is the stimulating principle.

GREGERS

May I ask with what illusion Hjalmar is inoculated ?

RELLING

No, thank you, I don't betray professional secrets to quacksalvers You would probably go and muddle his case still more than you have already But my method is infallible I have applied it to Molvik as well I have made him "dæmonic." That's the blister I have to put on his neck

GREGERS

Is he not really dæmonic then ?

RELLING

What the devil do you mean by dæmonic ! It's only a piece of gibberish I've invented to keep up a spark of life in him But for that, the poor

¹ "Livsløggen," literally "the life-lie"

harmless creature would have succumbed to self-contempt and despair many a long year ago And then the old lieutenant ! But he has hit upon his own cure, you see

GREGERS,

Lieutenant Ekdal ? What of him ?

RELLING

Just think of the old bear-hunter shutting himself up in that dark garret to shoot rabbits ! I tell you there is not a happier sportsman in the world than that old man pottering about in there among all that rubbish The four or five withered Christmas-trees he has saved up are the same to him as the whole great fresh Hoidal forest, the cock and the hens are big game-birds in the fir-tops, and the rabbits that flop about the garret floor are the bears he has to battle with—the mighty hunter of the mountains !

GREGERS

Poor unfortunate old man ! Yes, he has indeed had to narrow the ideals of his youth.

RELLING

While I think of it, Mr Weile, junior—don't use that foreign word ideals. We have the excellent native word *hens*.

GREGERS

Do you think the two things are related ?

RELLING

Yes, just about as closely as typhus and putrid fever.

GREGERS

Dr Relling, I shall not give up the struggle until I have rescued Hjalmar from your clutches !

RELLING

So much the worse for him Rob the average man of his life-illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same stroke [*To HEDVIG, who comes in from the sitting-room*] Well, little wild-duck-mother, I'm just going down to see whether papa is still lying meditating upon that wonderful invention of his [*Goes out by the passage door.*]

GREGERS

[*Approaches HEDVIG*] I can see by your face that you have not yet done it

HEDVIG

What ? Oh, that about the wild duck ! No.

GREGERS

I suppose your courage failed when the time came

HEDVIG

No, that wasn't it But when I awoke this morning and remembered what we had been talking about, it seemed so strange

GREGERS

Strange ?

HEDVIG

Yes, I don't know——. Yesterday evening, at the moment, I thought there was something so delightful about it, but since I have slept and thought of it again, it somehow doesn't seem worth while

GREGERS

Ah, I thought you could not have grown up quite unharmed in this house

HEDVIG.

I don't care about that, if only father would come up——

GREGERS

Oh, if only your eyes had been opened to that which gives life its value—if you possessed the true, joyous, fearless spirit of sacrifice, you would soon see how he would come up to you —But I believe in you still, Hedvig

[He goes out by the passage door]

[HEDVIG wanders about the room for a time; she is on the point of going into the kitchen when a knock is heard at the garret door HEDVIG goes over and opens it a little, old EKDAL comes out, she pushes the door to again]

EKDAL

H'm, it's not much fun to take one's morning walk alone

HEDVIG

Wouldn't you like to go shooting, grandfather?

EKDAL

It's not the weather for it to-day It's so dark there, you can scarcely see where you're going

HEDVIG

Do you never want to shoot anything besides the rabbits?

EKDAL

Do you think the rabbits aren't good enough?

HEDVIG

Yes, but what about the wild duck?

EKDAL

Ho-ho 'are you afraid I shall shoot your wild duck? Never in the world Never

HEDVIG

No, I suppose you couldn't, they say it's very difficult to shoot wild ducks

EKDAL

Couldn't ' Should rather think I could.

HEDVIG

How would you set about it, grandfather?—I don't mean with my wild duck, but with others?

EKDAL

I should take care to shoot them in the breast, you know, that's the surest place And then you must shoot against the feathers, you see—not the way of the feathers

HEDVIG.

Do they die then, grandfather?

EKDAL

Yes, they die right enough—when you shoot properly Well, I must go and brush up a bit. H'm—understand—h'm [Goes into his room

[HEDVIG waits a little, glances towards the sitting-room door, goes over to the book-case, stands on tip-toe, takes the double-barrelled pistol down from the shelf, and

looks at it GINA, *with brush and duster, comes from the sitting-room.* HEDVIG *hastily lays down the pistol, unobserved.*

GINA.

Don't stand raking amongst father's things, Hedvig

HEDVIG

[*Goes away from the bookcase*] I was only going to tidy up a little.

GINA .

You'd better go into the kitchen, and see if the coffee's keeping hot, I'll take his breakfast on a tray, when I go down to him

[HEDVIG goes out GINA *begins to sweep and clean up the studio* Presently the passage door is opened with hesitation, and HIALMAR EKDAL looks in He has on his overcoat, but not his hat, he is unwashed, and his hair is dishevelled and unkempt His eyes are dull and heavy.

GINA

[*Standing with the brush in her hand, and looking at him*] Oh, there now, Ekdal—so you've come after all?

HIALMAR

[*Comes in and answers in a toneless voice*] I come—only to depart again immediately.

GINA

Yes, yes, I suppose so But, Lord help us ' what a sight you are '

HIALMAR

A sight?

GINA.

And your nice winter coat too! Well, that's done for

HEDVIG

[*At the kitchen door*] Mother, hadn't I better——? [*Sees HIALMAR, gives a loud scream of joy, and runs to him*] Oh, father, father!

HIALMAR

[*Turns away and makes a gesture of repulsion*] Away, away, away! [*To GINA*] Keep her away from me, I say!

GINA

[*In a low tone*] Go into the sitting-room, Hedvig. [*HEDVIG does so without a word*]

HIALMAR

[*Fussily pulls out the table-drawer*] I must have my books with me. Where are my books?

GINA

Which books?

HIALMAR.

My scientific books, of course, the technical magazines I require for my invention

GINA.

[*Searches in the bookcase*] Is it these here paper-covered ones?

HIALMAR.

Yes, of course.

GINA.

[*Lays a heap of magazines on the table*] Shan't I get Hedvig to cut them for you?

HIALMAR

I don't require to have them cut for me
[*Short silence*]

GINA

Then you're still set on leaving us, Ekdal ?

HIALMAR

[*Rummaging amongst the books.*] Yes, that is a matter of course, I should think

GINA

Well, well

HIALMAR

[*Vehemently*] How can I live here, to be stabbed to the heart every hour of the day ?

GINA

God forgive you for thinking such vile things of me

HIALMAR.

Prove——!

GINA

I think it's you as has got to prove.

HIALMAR.

After a past like yours ? There are certain claims—I may almost call them claims of the ideal——

GINA

But what about grandfather ? What's to become of him, poor dear ?

HIALMAR

I know my duty, my helpless father will come with me. I am going out into the town to make

arrangements—— H'm—[*hesitatingly*] has any one found my hat on the stairs?

GINA

No Have you lost your hat?

HIALMAR

Of course I had it on when I came in last night, there's no doubt about that, but I couldn't find it this morning

GINA

Lord help us! where have you been to with those two ne'er-do-weels?

HIALMAR

Oh, don't bother me about trifles. Do you suppose I am in the mood to remember details?

GINA

If only you haven't caught cold, Ekdal
[*Goes out into the kitchen*]

HIALMAR

[*Talks to himself in a low tone of irritation, whilst he empties the table-drawer*] You're a scoundrel, Relling!—You're a low fellow!—Ah, you shameless tempter!—I wish I could get some one to stick a knife into you!

[*He lays some old letters on one side, finds the torn document of yesterday, takes it up and looks at the pieces, puts it down hurriedly as GINA enters.*]

GINA

[*Sets a tray with coffee, etc., on the table*] Here's

a drop of something hot, if you'd fancy it And there's some bread and butter and a snack of salt meat

HIALMAR.

[*Glancing at the tray*] Salt meat? Never under this roof! It's true I have not had a mouthful of solid food for nearly twenty-four hours, but no matter—My memoranda! The commencement of my autobiography! What has become of my diary, and all my important papers? [*Opens the sitting-room door but draws back*] She is there too!

GINA

Good Lord! the child must be somewhere!

HIALMAR.

Come out

[*He makes room, HEDVIG comes, scared, into the studio.*]

HIALMAR

[*With his hand upon the door-handle, says to GINA*] In these, the last moments I spend in my former home, I wish to be spared from interlopers—— [*Goes into the room*]

HEDVIG.

[*With a bound towards her mother, asks softly, trembling*] Does that mean me?

GINA

Stay out in the kitchen, Hedvig, or, no—you'd best go into your own room [*Speaks to HIALMAR as she goes in to him*] Wait a bit, Ekdal, don't rummage so in the drawers, I know where everything is

HEDVIG

[Stands a moment immovable, in terror and perplexity, biting her lips to keep back the tears, then she clenches her hands convulsively, and says softly]
The wild duck

[She steals over and takes the pistol from the shelf, opens the garret door a little way, creeps in, and draws the door to after her]
[HIALMAR and GINA can be heard disputing in the sitting-room]

HIALMAR

[Comes in with some manuscript books and old loose papers, which he lays upon the table] That portmanteau is of no use ! There are a thousand and one things I must drag with me

GINA

[Following with the portmanteau] Why not leave all the rest for the present, and only take a shirt and a pair of woollen drawers with you ?

HIALMAR

Whew !—all these exhausting preparations—— !
[Pulls off his overcoat and throws it upon the sofa]

GINA

And there's the coffee getting cold.

HIALMAR.

H'm

[Drinks a mouthful without thinking of it, and then another]

GINA

[Dusting the backs of the chairs.] A nice job

you'll have to find such another big garret for the rabbits

HIALMAR

What ! Am I to drag all those rabbits with me too ?

GINA

You don't suppose grandfather can get on with out his rabbits

HIALMAR

He must just get used to doing without them Have not *I* to sacrifice very much greater things than rabbits !

GINA

[*Dusting the bookcase*] Shall I put the flute in the portmanteau for you ?

HIALMAR

No No flute for me But give me the pistol !

GINA

Do you want to take the pistol with you ?

HIALMAR

Yes. My loaded pistol.

GINA.

[*Searching for it*] It's gone He must have taken it in with him

HIALMAR

Is he in the garret ?

GINA.

Yes, of course he's in the garret.

HIALMAR

H'm—poor lonely old man.

[He takes a piece of bread and butter, eats it, and finishes his cup of coffee]

GINA

If we hadn't have let that room, you could have moved in there

HIALMAR

And continued to live under the same roof with——' Never,—never'

GINA

But couldn't you put up with the sitting-room for a day or two? You could have it all to yourself

HIALMAR

Never within these walls'

GINA.

Well then, down with Relling and Molvik.

HIALMAR

Don't mention those wretches' names to me! The very thought of them almost takes away my appetite—Oh no, I must go out into the storm and the snow-drift,—go from house to house and seek shelter for my father and myself.

GINA

But you've got no hat, Ekdal! You've been and lost your hat, you know.

HIALMAR

Oh those two brutes those slaves of all the

vices ! A hat must be procured [*Takes another piece of bread and butter*] Some arrangement must be made For I have no mind to throw away my life, either [*Looks for something on the tray*]

GINA

What are you looking for ?

HIALMAR

Butter

GINA.

I'll get some at once [*Goes out into the kitchen*]

HIALMAR

[*Calls after her*] Oh it doesn't matter, dry bread is good enough for me.

GINA

[*Brings a dish of butter*] Look here, this is fresh churned

[*She pours out another cup of coffee for him, he seats himself on the sofa, spreads more butter on the already buttered bread, and eats and drinks awhile in silence*]

HIALMAR

Could I, without being subject to intrusion—
intrusion of any sort—could I live in the sitting-
room there for a day or two ?

GINA

Yes, to be sure you could, if you only would

HIALMAR

For I see no possibility of getting all father's things out in such a hurry

GINA

And besides, you've surely got to tell him first as you don't mean to live with us others no more.

HIALMAR

[*Pushes away his coffee cup*] Yes, there is that too, I shall have to lay bare the whole tangled story to him—— I must turn matters over; I must have breathing-time, I cannot take all these burdens on my shoulders in a single day.

GINA

No, especially in such horrible weather as it is outside.

HIALMAR.

[*Touching WERLE's letter*] I see that paper is still lying about here

GINA

Yes, *I* haven't touched it!

HIALMAR.

So far as I am concerned it is mere waste paper——

GINA

Well, *I* have certainly no notion of making any use of it

HIALMAR

——but we had better not let it get lost all the same;—in all the upset when I move, it might easily——

GINA

I'll take good care of it, Ekdal.

HIALMAR.

The donation is in the first instance made to

father, and it rests with him to accept or decline it.

GINA

[*Sighs*] Yes, poor old father——

HIALMAR

To make quite safe—— Where shall I find some gum ?

GINA

[*Goes to the bookcase*] Here's the gum-pot.

HIALMAR

And a brush ?

GINA

The brush is here too [*Brings him the things.*

HIALMAR

[*Takes a pair of scissors*] Just a strip of paper at the back——[*Clips and gums*] Far be it from me to lay hands upon what is not my own—and least of all upon what belongs to a destitute old man—and to—the other as well—There now Let it lie there for a time, and when it is dry, take it away. I wish never to see that document again Never !

GREGERS WERLE *enters from the passage.*

GREGERS

[*Somewhat surprised.*] What,—are you sitting here, Hialmar ?

HIALMAR.

[*Rises hurriedly*] I had sunk down from fatigue.

GREGERS

You have been having breakfast, I see

HIALMAR

The body sometimes makes its claims felt too

GREGERS

What have you decided to do ?

HIALMAR

For a man like me, there is only one course possible I am just putting my most important things together. But it takes time, you know

GINA

[*With a touch of impatience*] Am I to get the room ready for you, or am I to pack your portmanteau ?

HIALMAR

[*After a glance of annoyance at GREGERS.*] Pack—and get the room ready !

GINA

[*Takes the portmanteau*] Very well ; then I'll put in the shirt and the other things

[*Goes into the sitting-room and draws the door to after her*]

GREGERS.

[*After a short silence*] I never dreamed that this would be the end of it Do you really feel it a necessity to leave house and home ?

HIALMAR.

[*Wanders about restlessly*] What would you have me do ?—I am not fitted to bear unhappiness, Gregers I must feel secure and at peace in my surroundings.

GREGERS

But can you not feel that here ? Just try it I should have thought you had firm ground to build upon now—if only you start afresh And remember, you have your invention to live for

HIALMAR

Oh don't talk about my invention It's perhaps still in the dim distance

GREGERS.

Indeed '

HIALMAR

Why, great heavens, what would you have me invent ? Other people have invented almost everything already It becomes more and more difficult every day——

GREGERS

And you have devoted so much labour to it

HIALMAR.

It was that blackguard Relling that urged me to it

GREGERS

Relling ?

HIALMAR

Yes, it was he that first made me realise my aptitude for making some notable discovery in photography

GREGERS.

Aha—it was Relling '

HIALMAR

Oh, I have been so truly happy over it ' Not so

much for the sake of the invention itself, as because Hedvig believed in it—believed in it with a child's whole eagerness of faith —At least, I have been fool enough to go and imagine that she believed in it

GREGERS

Can you really think that Hedvig has been false towards you ?

HIALMAR.

I can think anything now It is Hedvig that stands in my way She will blot out the sunlight from my whole life

GREGERS

Hedvig ' Is it Hedvig you are talking of ? How should she blot out your sunlight ?

HIALMAR

[*Without answering*] How unutterably I have loved that child ' How unutterably happy I have felt every time I came home to my humble room, and she flew to meet me, with her sweet little blinking eyes Oh, confiding fool that I have been ' I loved her unutterably,—and I yielded myself up to the dream, the delusion, that she loved me unutterably in return

GREGERS.

Do you call that a delusion ?

HIALMAR

How should I know ? I can get nothing out of Gina ; and besides, she is totally blind to the ideal side of these complications. But to you I feel impelled to open my mind, Gregers. I cannot

shake off this flightful doubt—perhaps Hedvig has never really and honestly loved me.

GREGERS

What would you say if she were to give you a proof of her love? [*Listens*] What's that? I thought I heard the wild duck——?

HIALMAR.

It's the wild duck quacking. Father's in the garret

GREGERS

Is he? [*His face lights up with joy*] I say you may yet have proof that your poor misunderstood Hedvig loves you!

HIALMAR.

Oh, what proof can she give me? I dare not believe in any assurances from that quarter

GREGERS

Hedvig does not know what decent means.

HIALMAR

Oh Gregers, that is just what I cannot be sure of. Who knows what Gina and that Mrs Sorby may many a time have sat here whispering and tattling about? And Hedvig usually has her ears open, I can tell you. Perhaps the deed of gift was not such a surprise to her, after all. In fact, I'm not sure but that I noticed something of the sort.

GREGERS.

What spirit is this that has taken possession of you?

HIALMAR

I have had my eyes opened Just you notice,—you'll see, the deed of gift is only a beginning Mrs Sorby has always been a good deal taken up with Hedvig, and now she has the power to do whatever she likes for the child They can take her from me whenever they please.

GREGERS

Hedvig will never, never leave you.

HIALMAR

Don't be so sure of that If only they beckon to her and throw out a golden bait—' And oh! I have loved her so unspeakably! I would have counted it my highest happiness to take her tenderly by the hand and lead her, as one leads a timid child through a great dark empty room!—I am cruelly certain now that the poor photographer in his humble attic has never really and truly been anything to her She has only cunningly contrived to keep on a good footing with him until the time came

GREGERS

You don't believe that yourself, Hialmar.

HIALMAR

That is just the terrible part of it—I don't know what to believe,—I never can know it But can you really doubt that it must be as I say? Ho-ho,* you have far too much faith in the claim of the ideal, my good Gregers! If those others came, with the glamour of wealth about them, and called to the child.—“Leave him: come to us: here life awaits you——!”

GREGERS

[*Quickly*] Well, what then ?

HIALMAR

If I then asked her Hedvig, are you willing to renounce that life for me ? [*Laughs scornfully*] No thank you ! You would soon hear what answer I should get

[*A pistol shot is heard from within the garret*

GREGERS

[*Loudly and joyfully*] Hialmar !

HIALMAR

There now , he must needs go shooting too.

GINA

[*Comes in*] Oh Ekdal, I can hear grandfather blazing away in the garret by himself

HIALMAR

I'll look in——

GREGERS.

[*Eagerly, with emotion*] Wait a moment ! Do you know what that was ?

HIALMAR.

Yes, of course I know.

GREGERS

No you don't know. But *I* do. That was the proof !

HIALMAR

What proof ?

GREGERS

It was a child's free-will offering. She has got your father to shoot the wild duck

HIALMAR

To shoot the wild duck !

GINA.

Oh, think of that—— !

HIALMAR

What was that for ?

GREGERS

She wanted to sacrifice to you her most cherished possession, for then she thought you would surely come to love her again

HIALMAR.

[*Tenderly, with emotion*] 'Oh, poor child !

GINA

What things she does think of !

GREGERS

She only wanted your love again, Hialmar. She could not live without it

GINA.

[*Struggling with her tears*] There, you can see for yourself, Ekdal

HIALMAR.

Gina, where is she ?

GINA

[*Sniffs.*] Poor dear, she's sitting out in the kitchen, I dare say.

HIALMAR

[*Goes over, tears open the kitchen door, and says*]
Hedvig, come, come in to me ! [*Looks round*] No,
she's not here.

GINA

Then she must be in her own little room.

HIALMAR

[*Without*] No, she's not here either [*Comes in*]
She must have gone out

GINA.

Yes, you wouldn't have her anywheres in the house

HIALMAR

Oh, if she would only come home quickly, so that I can tell her—— Everything will come right now, Gregers, now I believe we can begin life afresh.

GREGERS

[*Quietly*] I knew it; I knew the child would make amends

OLD EKDAL *appears at the door of his room, he is in full uniform, and is busy buckling on his sword*

HIALMAR

[*Astonished*] Father ! Are you there ?

GINA

Have you been firing in your room ?

EKDAL

[*Resentfully, approaching*] So you go shooting alone, do you, Hialmar ?

HIALMAR

[*Excited and confused*] Then it wasn't you that fired that shot in the garret?

EKDAL.

Me that fired? H'm

GREGERS

[*Calls out to HIALMAR*] She has shot the wild duck herself!

HIALMAR

What can it mean? [*Hastens to the garret door, tears it aside, looks in and calls loudly*] Hedvig!

GINA.

[*Runs to the door*] Good God, what's that!

HIALMAR

[*Goes in*] She's lying on the floor!

GREGERS

Hedvig! lying on the floor!

[*Goes in to HIALMAR*

GINA

[*At the same time*] Hedvig! [*Inside the garret.*] No, no, no!

EKDAL

Ho-ho! does she go shooting too, now?

[*HIALMAR, GINA, and GREGERS carry HEDVIG into the studio, in her dangling right hand she holds the pistol fast clasped in her fingers*

HIALMAR.

[*Distracted*] The pistol has gone off. She has wounded herself. Call for help! Help!

GINA

[*Runs into the passage and calls down*] Relling !
Relling ! Doctor Relling, come up as quick as
you can !

[*HIALMAR and GREGERS lay HEDVIG down
on the sofa*]

EKDAL.

[*Quietly*] The woods avenge themselves.

HIALMAR

[*On his knees beside HEDVIG*] She'll soon come
to now. She's coming to——, yes, yes, yes.

GINA

[*Who has come in again*] Where has she hurt
herself? I can't see anything——

[*RELLING comes hurriedly, and immediately
after him MOLVIK; the latter without his
waistcoat and necktie, and with his coat
open.*]

RELLING.

What's the matter here ?

GINA

They say Hedvig has shot herself

HIALMAR.

Come and help us !

RELLING

Shot herself !

[*He pushes the table aside and begins to
examine her.*]

HIALMAR.

[*Kneeling and looking anxiously up at him.*] It

can't be dangerous ? Speak, Relling ! She is scarcely bleeding at all It can't be dangerous ?

RELLING.

How did it happen ?

HIALMAR.

Oh, we don't know—— !

GINA.

She wanted to shoot the wild duck.

RELLING

The wild duck ?

HIALMAR

The pistol must have gone off.

RELLING

H'm. Indeed

EKDAL

The woods avenge themselves But I'm not afraid, all the same.

[Goes into the garret and closes the door after him]

HIALMAR

Well, Relling,—why don't you say something ?

RELLING

The ball has entered the breast.

HIALMAR.

Yes, but she's coming to !

RELLING

Surely you can see that Hedvig is dead.

GINA

[*Bursts into tears*] Oh my child, my child

GREGERS.

[*Huskily*] In the depths of the sea——

HIALMAR

[*Jumps up*] No, no, she must live! Oh, for God's sake, Relling—only a moment—only just till I can tell her how unspeakably I loved her all the time!

RELLING

The bullet has gone through her heart Internal hemorrhage Death must have been instantaneous

HIALMAR

And I! I hunted her from me like an animal! And she crept terrified into the garret and died for love of me! [*Sobbing*] I can never atone to her! I can never tell her——! [*Clenches his hands and cries, upwards*] O thou above——! If thou be indeed! Why hast thou done this thing to me?

GINA.

Hush, hush, you mustn't go on that awful way We had no right to keep her, I suppose

MOLVIK

The child is not dead, but sleepeth.

RELLING

Bosh!

HIALMAR

[*Becomes calm, goes over to the sofa, folds his arms, and looks at HEDVIG*] There she lies so stiff and still

RELLING

[*Tries to loosen the pistol*] She's holding it so tight, so tight

GINA

No, no, Relling, don't break her fingers, let the pistol be

HIALMAR.

She shall take it with her.

GINA.

Yes, let her But the child mustn't lie here for a show. She shall go to her own room, so she shall Help me, Ekdal

[*HIALMAR and GINA take HEDVIG between them.*]

HIALMAR.

[*As they are carrying her*] Oh Gina, Gina, can you survive this'

GINA

We must help each other to bear it For now at least she belongs to both of us,

MOLVIK.

[*Stretches out his arms and mumbles*] Blessed be the Lord, to earth thou shalt return, to earth thou shalt return——

RELLING

[*Whispers*] Hold your tongue, you fool, you're drunk

[*HIALMAR and GINA carry the body out through the kitchen door RELLING shuts it after them. MOLVIK slinks out into the passage*]

RELLING

[*Goes over to GREGERS and says*] No one shall ever convince me that the pistol went off by accident

GREGERS

[*Who has stood terrified, with convulsive twitchings*] Who can say how the dreadful thing happened?

RELLING

The powder has burnt the body of her dress
She must have pressed the pistol right against
her breast and fired

GREGERS

Hedvig has not died in vain. Did you not see
how sorrow set free what is noble in him?

RELLING

Most people are ennobled by the actual presence
of death. But how long do you suppose this
nobility will last in him?

GREGERS

Why should it not endure and increase through-
out his life?

RELLING

Before a year is over, little Hedvig will be
nothing to him but a pretty theme for declamation.

GREGERS

How dare you say that of Hjalmar Ekdal?

RELLING

We will talk of this again, when the grass has
first withered on her grave. Then you'll hear

him spouting about "the child too early torn from her father's heart," then you'll see him steep himself in a syrup of sentiment and self-admiration and self-pity Just you wait'

GREGERS.

If you are right and I am wrong, then life is not worth living

RELLING

Oh, life would be quite tolerable, after all, if only we could be rid of the confounded duns that keep on pestering us, in our poverty, with the claim of the ideal.

GREGERS

[*Looking straight before him*] In that case, I am glad that my destiny is what it is

RELLING.

May I inquire,—what is your destiny?

GREGERS

[*Going*] To be the thirteenth at table.

RELLING

The devil it is

THE END.